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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELATING CURRICULUM POLICY TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE:
THE SECONDARY EDUCATION REVIEW



BY
HAROLD NETH

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE
STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1988

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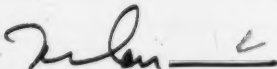
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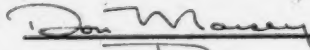
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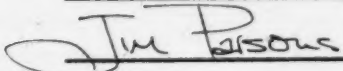
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Relating Curriculum Policy to Classroom Practice: The Secondary Education Review submitted by Harold Neth in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.



Supervisor





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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice. The Secondary Education Review in Alberta, conducted in 1984, provided occasion to question. The questions guiding the study are grounded in my classroom experience and in the concerns about policy and practice raised by social studies educators at the Red Deer Symposium on March 14 and 15, 1986. The questions revolve around the content of change recommended for social studies, the process of the Review, and assumptions made about classroom practice by policy-makers.

A description and analysis of the Secondary Education Review is provided. A critical analysis of documents from Alberta Education and the Government of Alberta explores the policy-making processes pursued in the Secondary Education Review.

An historical overview of social studies in Alberta examines traditional tensions in policy-making and contextualizes policy changes flowing out of the Review. Poor implementation of the 1971 social studies curriculum, a lack of Canadian content, a back to the basics movement, and a criticism of bureaucratic policy-making played a significant role in drawing the attention of legislators to curriculum policy. Government members expressed the belief that control of the goals of curriculum must lie with elected representatives. Committees appointed to assess aspects of education became the means for extending political control over the policy-making process in education.

Four models of policy-making lend further insight into the processes employed in the Secondary Education Review. The models include the systems model, the rational model, the public choice model, and incrementalism.

The recommended content for curriculum, the process of policy-making, and the assumptions about classroom practice made in the Secondary Review in Alberta bear similarity with reviews across North America. Writers critiquing contemporary policy-making suggest that the reformers ignored the classroom in arriving at new policy. Contemporary policy-makers assume that the implementation of new program can be achieved through legislation or the application of rational models of change that over-simplify the reality of the change process.

Research into implementation and my classroom experience point to the need to seek alternatives to the traditional and contemporary ways of relating curriculum policy to classroom practice. Change needs to be viewed as a process not an event. Two alternative ways of relating curriculum policy to classroom practice are examined. These include the symposium and action research.

The two alternatives examined do not offer panaceas. However, these alternatives do hold the promise of providing a forum in which the questions about educating youth can be open for discussion among educators and the public.

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CHAPTER 1

AN OCCASION TO QUESTION THE CURRICULUM POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

The conceptual perspective determines in large part which questions are seen as worth investigating and what sorts of answers are acceptable. The Weltanschauung or world view . . . conceptually shapes the way in which the world is experienced, and it is closely tied to the language system which one uses when one speaks of understanding the world. (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 113)

Alberta's Secondary Education Review

The relationship between the curriculum policy-making process and classroom practice became a source of inquiry for me when the Government of Alberta's Secondary Education in Alberta: Policy Statement of June, 1985, was made a central focus of eleventh hour discussions at a social studies Symposium held at Red Deer on March 14 and 15, 1986. At the Symposium, I discovered that there were many educators from around the province who shared my concerns about the nature of the proposed changes to the curriculum and the process by which the Policy Statement had been arrived at. Presentations made by other social studies educators supported my belief that the Policy Statement only served to widen the existing gap between curriculum policy and classroom practice as informed by the circumstances teachers find themselves in.

The June, 1985, Policy Statement was a response to curriculum policy initiatives set out earlier by the Government in the Secondary Education Review announced on February 9, 1984, by David King, then Minister of Education. In January of 1985, recommendations for changes to the province's secondary programs were first released in the document Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee: Foundation for the Future (Alberta Education, 1985). It seemed to me that the Policy Statement

was a reaffirmation of the Advisory Committee's policy recommendations for education in general and social studies in particular.

While we social studies educators might have been alarmed about the direction of change and the lack of input on policy at the Secondary Education Review stage, not until the Policy Statement of June, 1985, did we begin to realize what had transpired. It signaled a fundamental change in the direction of policy and program. Proposals called for a knowledge based curriculum and hence a shift in focus from the process oriented curriculum of 1981.

The 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum was process oriented. That document defined social studies as follows:

[h]istory, geography and the social sciences provide the content for [a process of] inquiry into social issues that are of public and personal concern. [Informed by the value, knowledge, and skill objectives, the goals of effective citizenship are] . . . to help students develop intellectual independence, moral maturity, and more effective involvement in the political, economic, and social affairs of their communities" (Alberta Education, 1981, p. 1).

The June, 1985, Policy Statement emphasized that social studies was one subject that would undergo immediate change. It noted that:

... citizenship education will be based on an understanding of history, geography, economics, and other social sciences as they effect the Canadian community. Our multi-cultural heritage and the interdependent nature of our world, and related citizenship skills will be important aspects of this study.

Critical inquiry depends upon a firm grasp of the facts. Careful analysis depends upon understanding context and continuity. The policy notes that social studies will become compulsory for all students through to the end of grade twelve. (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 33)

The indications were that social studies would shift in policy away from an issues centred curriculum to one where the knowledge of facts from history, geography, and economics was required before inquiry could take place. Gone was the notion that inquiry leads to a knowledge of and judgement about what the facts are. Facts were no longer ideological. They had become just facts.

The Policy Statement went on to explain that the 1981 Social Studies Curriculum would be reviewed for the purpose of examining its adequacy in light of the new policy. It stated, "Attention will be given to goal statements and to the organization and content of the Curriculum" (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 33). Further review will examine the content, the level of skill, and the objectives appropriate for a full range of students. The document included a proposal for a second level of social studies courses (streaming) and questioned the need to continue the social science electives in light of the call to make social studies compulsory through to grade 12 (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 33).

Social Studies Symposium

The provincial Social Studies Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association organized a Symposium in Red Deer in order to give educators an opportunity to express concern over the focus of the content of proposed curriculum changes in the Policy Statement of June, 1985. The Symposium was convened because a number of social studies educators felt that they had been excluded from the policy-making process.

Structure of the Symposium

The Symposium was organized to promote dialogue on policy-making and practice. Position papers were presented; responses representing the views of classroom teachers, university personnel, and Alberta Education directors were given; small groups further raised and discussed issues; and, a list of recommendations for policy-making direction was compiled from the small groups. This list was then forwarded to the Education Minister.

Many participants in the Symposium recognized that changes to the 1981 curriculum were needed. Problems with scope and sequencing of units, the

necessity to update some of the units, a need to rework the curriculum guide for better readability, and a need to reexamine the amount of content in some of the courses were all cited as concerns. However, teachers seemed to favor the inquiry process approach to learning over the proposed knowledge based curriculum.

Some of the participants at the Symposium also raised a number of concerns about the policy-making process followed in the Secondary Education Review. One concern revolved around the lack of consultation with teachers. As a result, the matters teachers consider important were ignored. In a presentation on teaching as personal meaning, J. C. Couture stated that the Secondary Review process had little relevance to his classroom practice. To him teaching is a process of daily discovering and rediscovering goals and objectives for himself and his students. He noted that "Class sizes, preparation time, professional development opportunities and the like will lie just outside the . . . review" (Couture, 1986, pp. 19-21)

A second concern revolved around the role of teachers in curriculum change.

Couture stated that:

The temptation has been to "situate" teachers within the curriculum development and management process . . . as delivery agents of clearly defined means and ends. The future of education in Alberta depends less on glossy publications and policy papers and more on the need to view teachers as an active group of autonomous agents who should control their work and the classroom terrain. (Couture, 1986, p. 20)

Couture suggested that teachers have been assumed to be a part of the bureaucracy and that our only function was to implement program. Couture argued for a change process whereby the concerns of the classroom teacher could be addressed and the control of change is vested with the teacher. This could only come about when policy-makers and teachers no longer accepted the notion that teachers were merely functionaries. Given that teacher participation in the review process had been relegated to seats on the Implementation Advisory Committee and nine Program Coordinating Committees, Couture went on to warn that teachers must avoid

assuming the role of mediators between outside stakeholder groups who are vying to ensure that their goals and expectations are incorporated into the curriculum (1986, p. 20).

Concern over the view policy-makers had about the role of the teacher in curriculum change was also expressed by Terry Carson. The Secondary Education Review had not involved educators in the policy change process, therefore it seemed that they had been regarded as civil servants whose task it is to implement program only. This point raised a further concern about the role of teachers in society. Were they to be viewed as functionaries as the policy-makers implied? If so, he raised yet another concern about the form of democratic decision-making that has evolved. Surveys of public opinion about education and solicited views from stakeholder groups only gave the appearance that democratic decision-making was taking place. The kinds of questions asked and the nature of the advertising used to publicize the events influenced what changes the public and stakeholder groups would demand. The elected representatives had in effect dictated policy goals. This approach to curriculum policy-making presented not only a crisis for social studies teachers as a professional association, it presented a crisis in democratic citizenship education (Carson, 1986, pp. 14-16).

Carson stated that despite the fact that teachers did not participate in policy-making during the Secondary Education Review, they should not assume that they do not have some opportunities to make decisions regarding their professional position in a democratic society. Carson maintained that as teachers we have a choice in whether we want to be viewed as instructional experts or pedagogues. If we choose the former, then we are accountable to the community. Direction and control will lie outside the individual teacher and the professional association. If we choose the latter, then we accept certain responsibilities for nurturing the youth of the community. In this case, direction and control remains with the teacher and the

profession. Carson also stated that we have a choice in determining the nature of the democratic community in which we live. We need to question the nature of and degree to which technical and administrative procedures have come to substitute for dialogue amongst community members (1986, pp. 15-16).

A questioning stance towards what we do is essential if we wish to realize our role as participants in curriculum policy-making. Some questions to be asked, according to Couture, include the following:

1. To what extent are teachers viewed . . . as instrumental agents?
2. What is, and should be considered legitimate knowledge in the curriculum?
3. Whose interests are being articulated or ignored in the selection and conveyance of that knowledge?
4. What cultural and ideological structures are being disorganized and delegitimated by the kind of curriculum being developed?
5. To what extent are teachers . . . being . . . pressured to respond to issues that are essentially limited to matters of technique rather than critical discourse? (1986, pp. 21-22)

These questions probe not only further assumptions made about teachers, but also the kinds of assumptions that are made in the choices of curriculum content in change efforts such as the Secondary Education Review. Because teachers have not effectively been involved in the policy-making process, a gap exists between curriculum policy and classroom practice. Teachers need to avoid the trap of taking the status quo for granted. While teachers live and work within the educational system, they must at the same time stand in opposition to it.

As teachers we should not assume that our exclusion from curriculum policy development is solely the function of those outside education extending controls over us. Teachers too must want to actively participate in curriculum change. What is at issue is just how willing teachers are to accept responsibility for their actions and just how willing the public is to grant this responsibility to them.

It seems that teachers in the province of Alberta have a history of sitting back and waiting until curriculum changes arrive before taking any initiative to become

involved. In 1972, Frank Crowther found that teachers least preferred representation on unit planning committees as a means for becoming informed about changes in program. L. W. Downey, in 1975, noted that the 1971 social studies curriculum had failed to act as a guide in most classrooms around the province. In 1982, researchers from the University of Alberta reported that the degree of teacher understanding of the 1981 social studies curriculum was not high (Whitney, 1986, pp. 28-29).

Terry Whitney argued that because teachers have this apparent lack of concern about curriculum change, they have helped create a scenario where it can occur without representation from them. Borrowing the concepts from Dwayne Huebner, Whitney further argued that the "centres of ideas," or educators living outside the classroom, have come to dominate the "centres of educational practice," and the classroom and the teachers who live there. The "centres of ideas" have developed a process and language of change that is foreign to the "centres of educational practice." As a consequence, teachers can be left out of the policy-making process. Whitney argued that a common language needs to be developed (1986, p. 28).

Critical Analysis

Contrary to what Whitney said, a common language among educators was demonstrated by the communication that occurred between members of the "centres of ideas" and the "centres of educational practice" at the Symposium. A willingness on the part of teachers to force the creation of a forum in which the discussion between the two centres can be maintained on an ongoing basis was required. Teachers face many demands on time, and often believe that their ideas about curriculum are insignificant. But teachers need to claim ownership of the classroom. Such ownership can only be achieved when teachers begin to question assumptions made in curriculum policy and classroom practice. We as teachers also

need to realize that to live in a democracy means the opportunity to assert ourselves exists. We should not assume someone else will make room for us on any agendas for debate in education.

While the implications of the Secondary Education Review for classroom teachers served as a catalyst for discussion among social studies educators, the challenge is to continue the discussion in a proper forum. In this forum, the questions of what it means to teach social studies, what should be changed, and how the changes should be brought about could be addressed. It would facilitate the development of a conceptual perspective for social studies educators.

Personal Meaning of Classroom Practice and Curriculum Policy Change

The Content of Policy as it Relates to Practice

A change in curriculum policy is an intention to change teaching practice. As a classroom teacher of social studies, I have come to understand that curricular intention and classroom reality are often worlds apart. Policy changes intend to change any one or a combination of: materials, course content, and the processes of teaching and learning. The latter, a change in practice, is most difficult to achieve.

The frequency of review and change of social studies curriculum within my teaching career suggests to me that there are continual and unsuccessful efforts on the part of policy-makers and educators to close the gap between the world of the planned program and the world of the classroom. The 1981 Social Studies Curriculum document, with some modification, was derived from the 1978 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum—Interim Edition (Alberta Education, 1981 and 1978). The 1978 curriculum came about as a result of parent, student, teacher, and stakeholder group dissatisfaction with the 1971 program of studies, entitled, Responding to Change (Alberta Education, 1971). The Social Studies in Alberta—1975: A Report of an Assessment, commonly known as the Downey Report.

confirmed this dissatisfaction and concluded that "... the Master Plan is ... five years after its creation, far more an idea ... than it is a guide ... in the classroom" (L. W. Downey, 1975, p. 7)

I had just graduated and was beginning my career as a teacher in 1976. I was not surprised by the conclusions of the Downey Report. As an undergraduate student at the University of Alberta in 1975, I had had a first-hand look at some of the teacher produced units that were intended to meet the objectives of that curriculum. In assessing these, the discrepancies between the curriculum as planned by the developers and the curriculum as presented to students in some of Alberta's classrooms soon became obvious. As a student I wondered how well-intentioned teachers could diverge so greatly from the curriculum developer's intentions.

In my first full-time teaching position I learned that there were a number of reasons for differences in interpretation. Working with 'slow learners' at the junior high level made the inadequacies of the curriculum guide and the problems of creating one to meet the needs of all students obvious to me. My pupils had difficulty understanding what it meant to be a Canadian living in the city of Edmonton in the province of Alberta. How could they comprehend what life was like in Maoist China as the curriculum intended? These students also experienced reading difficulties and many had behavioral problems as well. Finding reading material to meet curriculum requirements and the reading level of students was virtually impossible. Teaching students a specified content in the inquiry mode seemed foreign to that setting.

Certainly I was teaching under very special circumstances. But, as I spoke with other colleagues who were teaching in the 'regular' stream, I learned that some of the problems we shared with the curriculum varied only by degree. They complained that the curriculum guide was too vague, planning instruction and materials to meet

objectives was time consuming, they and the students had difficulty comprehending what inquiry meant, and appropriate reading materials were in short supply.

The 1978 Social Studies Curriculum—Interim Edition was a document that gave more direction to teachers. A value issue was identified for each topic and an accompanying list of values, knowledge, and skill objectives was provided. The promise was also made that appropriate learning resources were to follow. These changes in program were seen by myself and many of my colleagues as a step in the right direction.

When the 1981 Social Studies Curriculum arrived in schools, it was accompanied with the understanding that Alberta finally had a social studies program that would be around for awhile. After all, it was six years in the making and teacher input had been sought in an effort to close the gap between curriculum policy and classroom practice. The curriculum was definitive in its objectives and methods, prescribed reading materials would be available for students, Kanata Kits had been produced and teaching units would be developed to assist teachers with their planning, and there was to be an inservice program as well. If ever a heaven for teachers might exist, this promised to be it.

The 1981 Policy Change Process as it Related to My Practice

In 1980-81, I moved from my teaching assignment with the junior high Learning Assistance Program to one with social studies at the high school level. I thought that the opportunity to teach high school social studies would allow me to use inquiry as I experienced it in my university CI classes and as the curriculum guide envisioned it.

My first experiences at implementing the 1978 curriculum and then the 1981 curriculum resulted in disillusionment. Despite the efforts by Alberta Education to close the gap between policy and practice, it still existed for me and for others as well.

In retrospect, I can see where several assumptions had made this gap a fact of life. First, it was assumed that implementation was a simple technical matter. Our school board had opted out of the province's Mentor program, which was designed to provide inservice for teachers into the content and the processes called for in the revised curriculum. Inservice for most teachers consisted of one or two two hour sessions during which they were guided through several of the stages in the inquiry process. Additional handouts were given on those stages not covered during the session. Interpretation of the guide was basically the teacher's responsibility. Only later did I learn that the guide has a deceptive clarity about it. What the experiences did do was lead me to question how teachers could be expected to teach in a mode which they themselves had only read about and had not experienced.

A second assumption was that the inquiry model was 'the one best method.' The rhetoric suggested that any topic could be transformed into an issue that motivated everyone to learn. In my classroom it seemed that the myriad of concerns that the students and I brought to the setting did not always permit this. Moreover some students found inquiry and the fluidity of issues resolution too frustrating. I found that students and we as teachers have our own conceptions of what constitutes social studies and these must also be accommodated. For example, many students seem to have the expectation that the teacher will do much of the analysis and synthesis of the data, leaving them with a condensed body of information they should know. Such an attitude presents a difficulty in a class where the process of learning is as important as the content that is remembered.

A third assumption was that the arrival of prescribed resources would alleviate some of the teaching work load. The Kanata Kits and teaching units did provide a basic resource. However these often contained redundancies, which became tedious for student and teacher alike. In the interests of efficiency, textbooks often reduce exciting issues into boring lists of pros and cons. Library sources were and

are often in short supply and/or at too high of a reading level. I also learned that resource developers assumed students had certain levels of interpersonal and communication skills when in fact they did not. In some instances what was expected was simply beyond students to achieve. For example, grade ten students might be called on to write an essay without direction provided in terms of audience, purpose, structure, and format. One might argue that the teacher should give this information, but quite frankly teachers were often as ill-informed about such matters as were their students.

These were some of the frustrations I experienced with inquiry in social studies, but what of some of the sources of joy? I have found that satisfaction for student and teacher alike occurs when students come to the realization that they have a measure of control over and a responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it. Satisfaction also occurs when students have a say in the formulation of study questions, and when they evaluate the adequacy of information for the resolution of issues. When students gain the skills and knowledge to discover that they are no longer comfortable with the way they previously viewed the world, or they feel confident in using defensible arguments for their position, then student, teacher, and curriculum have met with a measure of success. There is a sense of empowerment.

My classroom practice informs me that I cannot put an over abundance of faith in any one technique or source of materials. When I give technique or curriculum top priority, that is how I approach my classes. To do so may risk reducing my relationship with students to one where teacher and student act as functionaries in our respective roles. As a teacher I feel that the curriculum is a mediating object in helping students and teachers to understand the world and ourselves. The necessary balance lost if the emphasis is focused exclusively on the teacher, the student, or the curriculum.

Just as students need a sense of ownership of the curriculum in the classroom,

teachers require a profound sense of familiarity and ownership of curriculum policy and program. A sense of ownership serves to close the gap between curriculum policy and classroom practice. I was fortunate enough to have gained a sense of familiarity and ownership of the curriculum when I had an opportunity to work on the development of curriculum specifications for social studies from grades seven through eleven. A thorough reading of the curriculum guide and discussion with other teachers informed my understanding of the document. Colleagues, with whom I subsequently worked with on a test construction committee, agreed that they too came to understand the curriculum in a way they had never done so before, because of this task.

Critical Analysis

Curriculum policy-making is defined as the process of arriving at an expression of intended goals and means for achieving these in an official policy statement. Curriculum development is the process of taking that statement and putting it into a form of guidelines for teachers to use in the classroom. My experience with implementing the 1981 curriculum suggests that it is important to involve teachers in those deliberations if the intentions are to be fully understood.

The typical notion of government policy-making has upper level bureaucrats and politicians planning policy, while lower level bureaucrats are given the task of implementing the legislated policy. When this approach is applied to education, implementation means the teacher is handed a curriculum guide in the expectation that he/she will implement according to plan. To be a teacher in this sense means I am a functionary. This approach ignores curriculum as personal meaning for the teacher. Those educators who deliberate on curriculum policy-making and program development committees have the benefit of a thorough knowledge of the curriculum, should other teachers be not so informed? If teachers are to be accountable for

curriculum implementation, then competency at implementation means more than simply being informed that policy change must be adopted. If teachers are to be responsible for curriculum in the classroom, then we can eliminate the technical notion of implementation on the understanding that policy and practice should inform each other.

Because of the kinds of experiences I have had as a classroom teacher, I have had an interest in the Secondary Education Review process and the recommendations for change that have followed. I feel that my classroom and those of all teachers in the province were evaluated without an evaluator having set foot in one classroom. Plans for change went ahead without a comprehensive effort being made at gaining a teacher's perspective on the curriculum and classroom practice. I could not help but question why teachers were not participants in the policy-making process. I also questioned the kinds of policy initiatives that might result in the absence of a teacher perspective. I further questioned how policy-makers could hope for success at implementation when teachers had not been involved in the process before that point.

Summary and Conclusions

Conceptual perspectives are both individual and group shared theories about our physical and social worlds and how we are to relate to these. No one perspective can claim to hold the truth. They are theories grounded in language that frame the kinds of interpretations we give to lived experience. They also define the decision-making process used to determine appropriate action as we act with meaning and intention in relation to other actors within a socio-historical context (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 113).

In pluralistic societies, like Alberta, many conceptual perspectives compete for ascendancy. Frequently societal institutions provide the forum in which competitors

conduct their struggle for the supremacy of their world views in day-to-day human action. In education, curriculum policy statements are expressions of hope for the present and future of students in our schools. There is however much disagreement over whose vision of hope is to prevail, who should participate in deciding what the educational intentions shall be, and how the resulting programs will be implemented and evaluated.

Alberta's social studies curriculum in particular is often at the forefront of controversy in the setting of educational policy. One explanation for this controversy lies in the dynamic nature of its subject matter. Society is continually changing, therefore the content of what is studied in the social studies classroom must also change. A second and perhaps more accurate reason for the controversy rests within the political nature of the content and the processes of social studies. Consequently, questions of whose history, whose culture, whose political and economic ideologies count as knowledge, and how these are to be studied become important political issues. While a certain conceptual perspective may dominate the curriculum for a time, when its full implications are realized, the support group becomes weak, or the ideas no longer seem workable, groups supporting other perspectives rally to the cause of instituting their vision of what the curriculum should be.

These characteristics of social studies curriculum contribute to periodic reviews of curriculum policy. With the Secondary Education Review it seemed as if Alberta social studies educators were witnessing the demise of an issues centred, process oriented curriculum in favor of one that is knowledge centred and content oriented. While they have been expected to embrace this policy and work whole-heartedly to implement it, they were not invited to participate in setting that policy.

The interpretation of teaching as personal meaning, as expressed by some of the Symposium participants and myself, suggests that pedagogy is an intentional

activity, not a mechanical process. Learning involves interaction between teacher, students, and curriculum. Teachers should be regarded as active persons responsible for their actions, not merely as passive technicians carrying out instructional functions. To be responsible means to be trustworthy. The teacher is responsible for decisions affecting the relationships between teacher, students, and curriculum. To be accountable implies that the teacher is not trustworthy. Decisions about the relationships between teacher, students, and curriculum must be imposed from the outside and periodically assessed to insure that fidelity is maintained.

It seems that policy-makers adopted the view that teachers are functionaries who implement and are to be held accountable. Because of this view, policy-makers bypassed social studies teachers in the Secondary Education Review process. The implication was that their views and experiences were unimportant in the change process. The questions policy-makers did ask were directed at what certain sectors of the public believed should be practicable. As a consequence, the answers the Review arrived at were based largely on assumptions about the nature of teaching and social studies curriculum made by those outside the classroom.

From a teacher's perspective, questions of curriculum change in social studies were not addressed in the Secondary Education Review. These questions include: What changes are needed from the classroom perspective? In what ways can real change in classroom practice be brought about? This implies a second order of questions that are seldom asked when curriculum change is contemplated. These questions include: What does it mean to teach social studies? What does it mean to be a student of social studies?

A change in curriculum policy implies a change in practice, and yet the policy development pursued through the Review seemed to treat the practitioners as instruments for implementation. This precedes the even greater assumption that the new program emerging from this process will be implemented faithfully in the

classroom. This method for introducing change is practiced in other government departments which pursue a linear approach to policy development and implementation. However, the size, complexity, and diversity of education as well as a tradition of teacher autonomy makes this approach to change in education unworkable.

The presence of educators at the Red Deer Symposium suggests that a process involving teachers in policy-making deliberations is essential if the gap between policy and practice is to be narrowed. More than that, however, the Symposium became a forum in which teachers could examine content and processes in social studies, and question the Secondary Education Review process and the assumptions made by policy-makers in giving it the direction it had.

Research Questions

The case of the Secondary Education Review in Alberta provides for me the context for the research questions. In her doctoral thesis, Vangie Bergum notes the following about questioning:

Questioning indicates the existence of an unsettled issue, a difficult matter, an uncertainty, a matter for discussion. It also invites a reply, a dialogue, a searching out of opposites and similarities. It opens possibilities, and leads, in some sense, to uncertainty, for it throws what may have been thought secure into disequilibrium or imbalance. If questioning points the way the importance of the "right" question is paramount. (Bergum, 1986, p. 1)

This study seeks to come to a better understanding of the relationship between curriculum policy-making and classroom practice through a critical analysis of the Secondary Education Review process. The following research questions direct the study: What is the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice as assumed by the procedures that were followed in the Secondary Education Review process? What is the historical context of the curriculum policy-making process? How does the Secondary Education Review relate to traditional methods of curriculum policy change in Alberta? Given the nature of classroom practice, it is important for

curriculum policy to become meaningful for teachers. What possibilities are there for reformulating policy-making procedures so as to give teachers a more active role?

Chapter Topics

Each chapter in the thesis examines certain elements of the relationship between curriculum policy-making and classroom practice using the Secondary Education Review as a case study.

In chapter two the Secondary Education Review process will be described, and I will do a critical analysis of the assumptions about the content and process of curriculum change that informed the policy-makers.

In chapter three I will attempt to provide a historical context for the Secondary Education Review process. In this chapter I will also analyze the Secondary Education Review policy-making process by interpreting it through four policy-making models.

The Secondary Education Review was produced in an environment of conservative education reform in North America. Chapter four attempts to relate the Secondary Education Review to these other reform efforts.

In chapter five I return to the main thesis question of relating curriculum policy to classroom practice. This chapter will explore alternatives to traditional policy-making procedures and evaluate these in the light of concerns expressed by teachers on the Secondary Education Review process.

Chapter six offers some conclusions concerning the need to close the gap between curriculum policy-making and classroom practice. The conclusions are drawn in the form of questions which all educators need to engage in discussing.

CHAPTER 2

THE SECONDARY EDUCATION REVIEW PROCESS

The Secondary Education Review culminated in the Government of Alberta's Secondary Education In Alberta: Policy Statement of June 1985. As an example of educational policy formulation, it gave teachers an occasion to question the curriculum policy-making process. Discussion in this chapter is guided by two questions: (1) What was the nature of the Secondary Education Review process? and (2) What assumptions did reformers make about the content and processes of curriculum change? Analysis and critique of the Secondary Education Review examines the implications it holds for teachers, especially those in social studies classrooms.

Secondary Education Review Procedures

Announcement of a review of Alberta's secondary school programs was made in a news release from Alberta Education on February 9, 1984. In the release and an accompanying brief entitled "Review of Secondary Education," David King, Minister of Education from 1978 to 1986, identified two reasons for the Review and the need for a program change. He noted that:

We believe this review is necessary because of the many changes that have occurred since our current secondary school program was developed in the 1970's.

The public is looking to the school system to better prepare our young people to live in the world of the future. Albertans need to provide firm direction to our education system to ensure that it meets their expectations and objectives.

Updating the curriculum from time to time is important, but the notion that the Review was a response to public pressure for change is significant. The implication is that the change was to be directed by the general will of Albertans in order to ensure that

their objectives and expectations would be met. Mr. King's comment implied that schools were somehow not performing as expected by the public, and so the establishment of "firm" public control over curriculum policy had become a necessity.

Approaches to Data Gathering

In garnering information for the setting of the new objectives, Alberta Education utilized several approaches. First, the public was solicited for their views. Second, academics were commissioned to study various aspects of secondary education. Third, relevant publications from other departments and governments were perused. Fourth, the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee met with various stakeholder groups. Last, the Policy Advisory Committee conducted a number of public forums.

1. Public Participation

Alberta Education sought public participation in several ways, these included a questionnaire sent to all households in Alberta, an opinionnaire given to 3000 students, a Gallup poll randomly sampling residents, and a call for briefs from interested groups and individuals.

The questionnaire and an accompanying information brochure were mailed to 856 000 households in the province. Of these, nearly 10 000 or about 1.2% responded to the questionnaire (Alberta Education, 1985, p. 1). A demographic breakdown provided a profile of the respondents. They were "parents (71 percent), female (60 percent), between the ages of 35 and 54 (50 percent), professional (47 percent), and live in . . . Metropolitan . . . Calgary and Edmonton (44 percent)." (McEwen, 1984, p. 4) In other words, the respondents were most likely to be middle to upper middle class mothers with school aged children who lived in one of Alberta's two major cities.

The sample could not be construed to be representative of Alberta's population. Census of Canada figures for 1981 indicated that 49 percent of Alberta's population

were female, 27 percent were between the ages of 35 and 54, 14 percent were professional, and 77 percent were urban dwellers, (McEwen, 1984, p. 4). Alberta Education concluded that the length of the questionnaire discouraged response from those not directly affected by secondary education programs (The Public's View, 1985, p. 1).

The second method for gaining information about public expectations for Alberta's education system was through an opinionnaire. In this survey, eighty-two objectives were rated by nearly 3000 grade ten and twelve students from selected schools across the province. Since these were similar to those ranked by students in a study eleven years earlier, the results were also seen as a valuable look at attitude changes over this time period.

The third method for soliciting public opinion was the use of a Gallup Poll. One-thousand people were randomly asked to comment on topics relating to Alberta's secondary school system. The responses of this group were sometimes different from those derived through the questionnaire, and not all of the questions were identical (The Public's View, 1985, p. 2).

The fourth means for public input was through the submission of briefs. Nearly 200 of these were accepted from individuals, stakeholder groups, and other government departments (The Public's View, 1985, p.2). A sample listing of those submitting briefs includes: students and citizens from an English 20 Class at Ardrossan Junior-Senior High School, and a group of Nanton area citizens; teacher and administrative groups such as the Alberta Teacher's Association, staff of Camrose Composite High School, and County of Mountainview No. 17 School Administrators; school boards such as some of the various committees and associations within the Calgary Board of Education, Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools, and the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education; from the universities the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta,

and The University of Calgary Senate; government committees and departments like the Social Studies Curriculum Coordinating Committee, Curriculum Policies Committee, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, Alberta Utilities and Telecommunication, Alberta Tourism and Small Business, Alberta Agriculture, and Alberta Manpower; and other community groups such as Alberta Labour, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta (Alberta Education, 1985, pp. 22-25). An extensive list of the groups, organizations, and government agencies having presented briefs is found in Appendix A of Review Of Secondary Programs. Alberta's Secondary Program: The Public's View (Alberta Education, 1985, pp. 22-25).

Reporting on the Public's Expectations and Objectives for Education

The results from the four studies on public opinion were analyzed, synthesized, then written for public consumption in a booklet entitled Review Of Secondary Programs. Alberta's Secondary Education Program: The Public's View. This task was performed by Stephen Weatherbe, a writer for the Edmonton Journal. The booklet presented general statements and conclusions about what the public's expectations were in relation to four basic issues in secondary education. The list of issues included: "the purposes of secondary education; the content of the curriculum; how students learn best; and the distribution of rights, roles and responsibilities." (The Public's View, 1985, p. 2)

This list of issues had been developed by the Policy Advisory Committee appointed by the Education Minister for the purposes of examining all data gathered in the Secondary Review and then making recommendations for policy change. Members of the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee, so as to be representative of Albertans, were drawn from various parts of the province and from different walks of life. Mr. King had made it known on the day of the announcement of the Review that

the committee would be chaired by Halvar Jonson, who is MLA for Ponoka, had been president of the Alberta Teachers' Association in 1976-1977, and, was at the time, a high school principal (Alberta Education, February 9, 1984). Other Committee members were announced by the Minister in a news release from Alberta Education on April 13, 1984. A list of the names included: Patrick J. Gorman, businessman, rancher, community organizer, and one time school board trustee from Grande Prairie; Harlene Mosby of Turner Valley, a trustee with Foothills School Division; Lynn Sawyer, a student, from Edmonton; and Peter C. Valentine of Calgary, who was unable to work on the Committee due to other commitments. Because the Territories use the Alberta curriculum, Arnold McCallum, former school principal and long time MLA for Slave Lake, was appointed as their representative by Education Minister David Patterson of the Northwest Territories. An additional member, R. Bryan Targett, a principal from Calgary, was named by David King in a news release from Alberta Education dated July 10, 1984. The Alberta Education representative was Ron Livermore, who performed the duties of executive secretary to the committee (Alberta Education, January 10, 1985).

The four issues in education addressed in The Public's View were derived from the Advisory Committee's list of four key questions used for the purpose of organizing the data gathered in the review. The Advisory Committee questions were as follows:

1. What is the purpose of secondary education?
2. What attitudes, knowledge and skills are required of secondary education students?
3. In what ways can students learn best?
4. What are the roles, rights and responsibilities of all the participants in schooling? (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 4)

In completing its mandate, the Advisory Committee concluded a comprehensive statement on the 'public's' opinion. Some conclusions on the purposes of education

were that schools "facilitate the intellectual, emotional, moral and physical growth of their children." (The Public's View, 1985, p. 20) Schools should also ensure that students gain competency in their course work. Albertans were concerned that students develop work related skills through the school. The public wants "children to develop a system of values that stresses respect for human rights and civic duties, and to become acquainted with the cultures and religions of the world." (The Public's View, 1985, p. 20)

In terms of curriculum content, the public wanted a conventional slate of courses with tighter controls for any options that might be offered. Emphasis was placed on teaching communication skills, math skills, and Canadian history in social studies, as well as science and career education. (The Public's View, 1985, p.20).

To facilitate a process where students learn to the best of their ability, the public was of the opinion that the quality of teaching could be improved by "raising certification standards; or by ... periodic evaluation." (The Public's View, 1985, p.20)

On the issue of roles, rights, and responsibilities, the public reaffirmed the province's role in setting curriculum and defining standards of achievement. However public opinion also said that local communities should play a larger role in any decision-making that affects the secondary program.

Critical Analysis

The four studies were assumed to represent the public's views on what the expectations and objectives for the province's education system should be. In what sense are these accurate assessments? A number of questions and concerns can be raised.

First, in relation to the household survey, it can be argued that this does not accurately represent the public's opinion. A 1.2% response casts doubt on this study as a comprehensive survey of the public's view. A demographic breakdown

indicates the respondents were from middle class professional families and thus represented only a certain segment of the public. Opinions gained were the product of the questions asked and the format given for response. For example, section five of the questionnaire requested that respondents indicate which of the major subject areas in the junior and senior high program should be core, optional, or should not be offered. In Social Studies and the Social Sciences, respondents were asked to rate Canadian history, world history, geography, current events, governments, economics, and societal problems as core, optional, or not to be offered (Alberta Education, 1984, p. 5). The public was presented a limited choice of the possible disciplines that might be included for study. Why the list did not include the titles of all the social science disciplines was never explained. Alberta Education's acceptance of the results from such an opinionnaire as an expression of the public will on the content of social studies is a highly questionable practice.

While Alberta Education surmised that the length of the questionnaire turned people away from responding, there could have been other reasons. One reason may have been that the general public felt sufficiently satisfied with the education system as it stood. Perhaps another reason was that the public believed they were not well enough informed to comment on some of the questions. For example, the public did not have information on how the disciplines are represented in the various social studies courses. Without that information, comment on what should or should not be included in social studies was sheer speculation. It may also be that the public believes that questionnaires have little effect on the shaping of policy.

Second, it seems that the student opinionnaire was not an assessment of public views, but rather an assessment of the views of a stakeholder group in the educational process. Little or no information was made readily available to the public on how the 3000 students were selected, nor was any effort made to show what kinds of objectives the students were asked to rank. To suggest that similar and not

identical objectives to those ranked eleven years ago could be used to demonstrate attitude changes over that period is not sound research.

Third, the results from two very different studies were used to arrive at a public consensus on objectives for education. On the surface at least, this seems to lack accuracy as an assessment of what the two groups were saying. The Gallup Poll, given its reputation for reliability, was perhaps the most accurate assessment of public opinion. However the Gallup Poll respondents were asked to rank order a list of five educational goals, while the questionnaire respondents were asked to rate sixteen goals (The Public's View, 1985, p. 4). The questions asked of the two groups were not always comparable. (The Public's View, 1985, p. 2)

Fourth, a list of the groups who made written submissions regarding their views on the goals of education suggests that it was less a gauge on the views of the public per se than it was a means for various stakeholder groups to make their representations. A reading of this list also suggests that this was the avenue most open for those in the educational community to make their ideas on education known. However, just what impact any one or a group of submissions had on the final recommendations for change is unknown.

What was eventually offered as a statement of the public's view on the goals of education was, with the exception of the Gallup Poll, a view comprised from a host of stakeholder groups. Teachers, unless they filled out the questionnaire or submitted briefs, had no direct way to voice the kinds of changes they believe necessary in education. That we as teachers seemed willing to accept this role suggests that not only Alberta Education sees us as functionaries, we see ourselves that way too.

While the document, The Public's View, makes some statistical reference to responses from the various surveys of public opinion, there is little or no elaboration on specifics about the samples and questions used in the studies, no data in the form

of tables or graphs is provided from the original reports, and no mention is made about the nature of those responses that diverged from majority opinion. The booklet only provides an interpretation of the public's expectations in relation to the purposes of secondary education; the content of the curriculum; how students learn best; and the distribution of rights, roles and responsibilities. This interpretive process implies that the government assumed that the public did not want to draw its own conclusions from the results of the studies. The preference was to provide analysis of research and subsequent recommendations for policy change from the interpretations made by the Policy Advisory Committee members.

Committee members, with the exception of Sawyer, had been or were, at the time of their serving on the Committee, school principals or trustees. Their credentials suggest that they were not so much representative of the average Albertan as they were representative of this particular group within the educational community. The fact that they were drawn from those ranks should not be construed to mean that they in some way represented a voice for teachers, or for that matter, educators generally. Their selection does indicate that the government wanted an educational perspective in the interpretation of the results, yet wanted to insure control over that interpretation.

In contrast to the Advisory Committee's list of four key questions used in organizing research data, Mr. King had presented his list of four questions that were to guide the study into secondary education when he made the announcement for the Review. The questions were:

1. What attitudes, knowledge, and skills do students need to acquire in in order to live meaningful, productive and happy lives?
2. What attitudes, knowledge, and skills should all students learn in order to ensure the preservation and advancement of our democratic/economic society?

3. Which of these are basic requirements that should be provided by a publicly funded system of education?
4. What educational opportunities, if any, beyond the basic requirements are appropriately provided by a publicly supported system of education? (Alberta Education, February 9, 1984, pp. 1 and 2)

No explanation was offered publicly as to why the focus for the Secondary Education Review had shifted. The Minister's list focused on a search of what attitudes, knowledge, and skills the public believed students should hold. His Advisory Committee made this but one component and went on to look at the educational infrastructure. At this juncture it seems that teachers should have had a right to be full participants in the development of policy, unfortunately Alberta Education assumed we did not have a right. Teachers must have input on statements about how students learn best and what the roles, rights, and responsibilities of educators are to be. To allow teachers a participatory role would have only granted to us the same opportunities that other stakeholder groups had been given.

In a concluding statement on the findings of the studies, the Advisory Committee noted in The Public's View that overall, "Albertans are . . . satisfied with the present secondary school system . . ." (Alberta Education, 1985, p. 20 and 21). With this one statement the Committee undermined all the alleged concerns the public had raised on the four issues in education. If Albertans were indeed satisfied, why did the Minister's Advisory Committee make a myriad of recommendations for change? Why did the Alberta Government subsequently adopt these in the June, 1985, Policy Statement? And why has the government expended so much time, money, and effort to ensure that these changes come about?

2. Commissioned Studies

In addition to surveying the public's responses to secondary education, expert

opinion was sought from academics in commissioned papers. A list of the papers includes: an historical overview of education in Alberta by Dr. Nancy Sheehan of the University of Calgary, a profile on the nature of secondary students by Dr. John Mitchell of the University of Alberta, an international comparison of educational systems by Dr. R. F. Lawson and B. Stevenson of the University of Calgary, a look at future trends in education by L. J. D'Amore and Associates Ltd. of Montreal, and a synthesis of these future trends was done by Dr. Richard Butt of the University of Lethbridge. Summaries of each of these papers were provided by Alberta Education in a Review Of Secondary Programs. Alberta Secondary Education Review: Research Basis.

Reviews of education in Alberta occur at a frequency approaching once every decade. These reviews can be attributed to a variety of social, political, and economic factors at work in society. In her paper, entitled Educational Developments, Societal Conditions and the Secondary School in Alberta: An Historical Overview. Sheehan notes the Secondary Education Review was brought on by a downturn in Alberta's economy in the 1980's. Many called for a return to traditional values and, as Sheehan pointed out, "The quality of education was questioned by business, by the universities and by the public in general. A "back to the basics" movement had begun." (Research Basis, 1985, p. 7)

Schools in the past eighty years have come to serve two purposes. Today, as in the past, the high school is an academic institution. But in recent years, it has come to serve a social function as well. Schools are retaining more youth for longer periods of time because of the programs offered. In fact schools have taken over responsibilities that formerly belonged to other institutions. Sheehan concludes that "The challenge to reformers is to reconcile the educational and social roles of an institution serving a widely different population in terms of abilities and backgrounds" (Research Basis, 1985, p. 7 and 8)

Adolescence is an important time for moral and interpersonal development. In The Alberta Secondary Student: Some General Growth Profiles, Mitchell notes that adolescents want to experience the freedom to make choices and to face the consequences of those choices. Adolescents need a belief system. If one is not provided for our youth, there will be dire consequences to follow. Mitchell believes that schools must stop isolating the young from society and afford them the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution (Research Basis, 1985, pp. 12 and 13).

Lawson and Stevenson, in their paper entitled Comparative Studies Project, Part 2: Interpretation Report, provided a comparative overview of secondary educational systems in other countries. Choices of countries selected for review were based on similarities with Canadian educational traditions or innovations in methods and structures in secondary education. The list of countries included "... the United Kingdom, The Federal Republic of Germany, The German Democratic Republic, Japan, Sweden, France, and the Soviet Union." (Research Basis, 1985, p. 14) American states selected for study included California, Texas, Maryland, Minnesota, and Alaska (Research Basis, 1985, p. 14).

Reforms in the countries and states studied are conservative in nature. The focus for change is on the content of core programs and the setting of standards of achievement. Self-discipline is seen as a means to achieve success. The political force behind the reform movement tends to come from education ministries as well as from schools and the community (Research Basis, 1985, p. 17 and 18).

Reformers in other countries recognize the importance of the teacher in the change process. The means to ensure quality education is to raise certification requirements for teachers, provide inservicing, and periodic evaluation. Teachers have a responsibility to not only implement program, but to help in planning for quality education. Lawson's and Stevenson's findings indicate that.

... long-range planning and innovations should be a combined effort of professionals in the government, the universities and the schools, along with the local community, and that the process of improvement should be continuous. (Research Basis 1985, p. 17 and 18)

Their statement suggests that curriculum planning should be an ongoing process that involves the community.

The paper by L. J. D'Amore and Associates Ltd., Images of the Future, consolidated a number of futuristic perspectives and the implications these might have for Canada and Alberta. In addition, the impact of technology on societal institutions was assessed. Conclusions arrived at were further validated by experts representing various social science disciplines (Research Basis, 1985, p. 19).

A group of nine educators then reviewed Images of the Future to determine issues and concerns which could have implications for the development of a framework for Alberta's secondary education system (Research Basis, 1985, p.19). Butt of the University of Lethbridge synthesized the views of these specialists in a report entitled Pioneering the Future: Educational Implications and Policy Directions for Alberta Secondary Schools.

Butt stated that an image of a desirable future should be developed through systematic participation of the community. Greater self-reliance is the means for overcoming the sense of alienation so prevalent in modern society. People need to participate in planning the future. At the community level, traditional lines of bureaucratic control must give way to "participatory decision-making" and a sense of teamwork. Butt concedes that the achievement of such a future will require an examination of current values as "new ethical procedures" are created (Research Basis, 1985, pp. 19 and 20). While Butt does not offer a framework for such an exploration of values, he does note that policy development must include strategies for encouraging and enabling all community groups to participate in change (Research Basis, 1985, p. 24).

An image of the new future must view education as a community project. Schools have to be integrated with society. To facilitate this process, Butt believes that "A coherent statement of purpose, responsibility and function is needed to . . . unite all the separate elements of secondary education . . ." (Research Basis, 1985, p. 23) Institutional change requires time and an understanding of the realities that exist in communities, schools, and classrooms (Research Basis, 1985, p. 24).

Critical Analysis

What the reports from the academics established in terms of the institutional changes proposed through the Secondary Education Review was yet another set of views from outside the school and the classroom. Sheehan provides a historical context which points out that educational change in the eighties is part of a back to the basics movement or a return to more traditional values in education. The implication is that this movement is cyclical, a reaction to the broader role schools were given in the late sixties and during the seventies. Sheehan's theory explains in part why members of the public wanted change in educational policy, but it does not examine how schools had fared achieving their earlier mandate or why teachers and students in the classroom might want change.

Mitchell's general statements about the nature of adolescents says little about the nature of youth in Alberta, and even less about the specific concerns those students might have. The assumption that was made by Mitchell and Alberta Education when it commissioned his work is that one can gain an accurate assessment of Alberta's student needs without speaking to or working with them directly. To have made this assumption flies in the face of his recommendation that youth not be isolated, and that they should make meaningful contributions to society.

The report by Lawson and Stevenson lends support to Alberta Education's efforts at reform, after all the political force behind educational reform around the

world, including the Soviet Union, comes from the education ministries. This circumstance suggests that nations around the world share a mistaken view of how change in education can be effected, and Alberta joined them. To state that education ministries direct the changes and then suggest that teachers have a responsibility to plan as well as implement program is a direct contradiction; unless of course by planning it is meant that teachers design packaged materials to suit the policy made by education ministries. In such a case the teacher is accountable to the policy-maker, and therefore not in control of nor responsible for his or her actions.

Butt's synthesis of the specialist's views on D'Amore's Images of the Future is an expression of the need for community participation in decision-making. What remains in question is the nature of that participation. If alienation is to be overcome, people need to help create agendas for debate. Unfortunately Butt fell prey to the lure of control. While he made an eloquent appeal to abandon such an approach, he assumed that a starting point for community discussion should be a ready-made list of characteristics for a desirable future found in an accompanying appendix, Appendix B "A Vision For A Desirable Future." A companion list of the kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes that would be required for living this desired future is also provided (Research Basis, 1985, p. 32 and 33). Given the nature of Butt's recommendations, one is left to question the wisdom of providing such a list. If we are truly interested in combating alienation, then we must dispense with the notion that there is one reality for all.

3. Reports from "Other Jurisdictions"

Still another approach was used in assessing concerns in education and establishing principles for review of secondary programs. This approach involved a perusal of recent reports and documents on education and reform. Some of these had been produced by Alberta Education, while others came from various agencies

in Canada, the United States, and Europe (Research Basis, 1985, p. 1).

A reading of the titles indicates a broad spectrum of topics ranging from future perspectives for Alberta, to youth, culture, work, school subjects, education in general, reviews of education in other provinces and decision-making. Some of the documents on the list include: Agenda for the Future: Situation Report and Departmental Outlook produced by Alberta Education, Proposals For an Industrial and Science Strategy For Albertans, 1985 to 1990 a Government of Alberta White Paper, Early School Leavers in Northern Alberta from the Development Council, New Policy Directions on Cultural Diversity in Alberta, prepared by the Cultural Heritage Policy Development Committee for the Minister of Culture, Attitudes Toward the World of Work from Alberta Education, Language Arts Presentation by the Language Arts Curriculum Coordinating Committee to the Curriculum Policies Committee at Alberta Education, Directions: The Final Report produced by the Minister's Advisory Committee Curriculum and Instruction Review in Saskatchewan, Report of the Secondary Education Review Project from Ontario's Ministry of Education, and Curriculum Decision-Making in Alberta (Reports I-IV) the proceedings of conferences sponsored by Alberta Education, Alberta Teachers' Association, and Alberta School Trustees' Association (Research Basis, 1985, pp. 28-30).

Recently published books on the topic were also reviewed as a source of information. A list of some of these books include: Canadian Education in the 1980's by Donald J. Wilson, No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap by James W. Botkin et. al., High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America by Ernest L. Boyer, The Rise Report from the California Commission for Reform of Intermediate and Secondary Education, A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future by John Goodlad, A Nation at Risk by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School by Theodore R.Sizer. The titles suggest that Alberta Education had looked at some of the

problems in education, education in the eighties, and the future of education. Appendix A "Sources Of Information For The Secondary Education Review" provides a list of these (Research Basis 1985, pp. 27-31).

Critical Analysis

The list of the reports and books perused for the Secondary Education Review shows that a wide range of documentation was used. The effort to do so is commendable. However, all documents do not share the same amount of influence on decision-makers. Some inform more than others. For example, frequent reference to excellence in education throughout Alberta's Secondary Education Review documents suggests that A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, had an audience receptive to its message.

While Alberta's education system may share similarities with those in the United States, it also has some fundamental differences. No one had deliberately set out to examine how excellent schools in Alberta already were. It was simply assumed that the conditions in this province were similar enough to warrant the imposition of the same kinds of treatment that schools in the United States were assumed to require to make them healthy. Such a position ignores the fundamental differences that exist in educational funding and control between Canada and its neighbor. It also ignores the dissimilarities in the social, historical, and economic fabric of the two nations. More than that, such a position assumes that change can be imposed on schools without regard for the culture that already exists there. Change established on such a weak foundation is not likely to be sustained in the absence of close scrutiny.

4. Other Forms of Input

Yet another means for gathering information involved representations made at

meetings. Members of the Minister's Advisory Committee and the Project Team from Alberta Education attended public forums sponsored by the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 1).

The Project Team was led by Dr. Phil Lamoureux, Director of Language Services, Alberta Education. He had been appointed by Mr. King as the Coordinator of the Secondary Program Review (Alberta Education, 1984, p. 2). The team had responsibility for the professional and technical aspects of the Review (Alberta Education, February 9, 1984, p. 3).

In addition to attending public forums, Advisory Committee and Project Team members met with representatives from the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Trustees' Association, the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents, university personnel, and the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding.

Critical Analysis

The public forum approach to gathering data perhaps most closely relates to the idea of democratic participation in curriculum policy-making as envisioned by Butt in his report Pioneering the Future. The information drawn from the forums and conferences were screened through the four key questions the Policy Advisory Committee had established as a criteria for analyzing and synthesizing the data it received. Because the Committee used these four questions to filter the recommendations from these groups, the implication is that information from some of the groups would have been worthy of consideration while that of others would have been ignored.

The Time line for Review

When making the announcement of the Review, Mr. King also elaborated on the agenda for the Review process. Released at that time, the brief, entitled "Review

Of Secondary Education", noted that the information gathered from the public, stakeholder groups, and commissioned academic studies would be completed in a four month period from March 1, to June 30, 1984. A synthesis of the data gathered was to be completed by the Minister's appointed Policy Advisory Committee for the purpose of recommending a policy framework for secondary education. Time allotted for this task was from July 1, 1984, to October 1, 1984. Release of the Government's secondary education policy was to take place on October 1, 1984, with discussion of it to be closed on March 1, 1985. Revisions would begin in April of 1985 and implementation would require a minimum of two more years (Alberta Education, 1984, pp. 3 and 4).

Observations on the Secondary Education Review Procedures

The time line Mr. King outlined was to eventually prove unrealistic. While the time allotment for information gathering was quite closely adhered to, the other phases of the Review required more time. The Advisory Committee recommendations were handed down in January of 1985. Public discussion of these occurred at seven major centres around the province in a two week period between March 19, and April 3, 1985 (Alberta Education, Information Bulletin). The Government's Policy Statement was not released until June, 1985, and while some aspects of the policy have been implemented since 1985, specific course changes were still to be initiated in the fall of 1987 and later.

The Secondary Education Review had begun as an effort to update the curriculum and to ascertain what expectations and goals the public had for education in Alberta. The focus of the information gathering however suggests, by and large, that the general public had little input to the document on The Public's View. What was accepted as the public's view was more an amalgam of input from various stakeholder groups in the province. Classroom teachers were notable by their

absence in effective representation on deliberations for change in policy.

The other forms of data gathering including academic reports, the literature reviews, and public forums also seemed to be organized on the assumption that change in curriculum policy could be achieved without directly inquiring into existing classroom practice in Alberta. The degree of influence any one source of information had over others in the recommendations for change that followed the Review process is difficult to determine. What is known is that the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee chose to examine the data in the light of what they identified to be the four main issues in modern education.

Secondary Education Review: Recommendations for Policy Change

The Minister's Policy Advisory Committee made recommendations for change based on research of the public's view, commissioned studies from academics, a perusal of relevant documents from other departments, governments and writers in education, and the public forums they conducted. The Committee's recommendations formed the basis of the Government's Secondary Education in Alberta: Policy Statement released in June of 1985. A plan for implementing the Policy Statement was provided in January of 1986.

Advisory Committee Recommendations

On January 10, 1985, David King made public the report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on the Secondary Education Review. The report, entitled Review Of Secondary Programs. Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee: Foundation for the Future, was the product of an analysis and synthesis of all the data gathered in the first phase of the Review. It provided recommendations regarding the purpose of secondary education, the attitudes, knowledge and skills students should gain, the ways students learn best, and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of stakeholder groups in education.

1. Purposes of Education

Recommendations regarding the purposes of education were many. In general terms, the Advisory Committee noted that educational programs should strive to achieve the goals of schooling adopted by the Alberta Legislature in 1978. Accordingly, schools should develop "intellectual curiosity," promote interpersonal skills, develop a sense of community responsibility, foster an appreciation of the family, give students a sense of purpose, and instill values of fairness responsibility and good citizenship. Schools should also teach critical thinking skills and make students aware of the need to take responsibility for their decisions. Standards of excellence should be set at all levels in the secondary program (Foundation for the Future, 1985, pp. 5-9).

2. Attitude, Knowledge, and Skill Development

Recommendations on the attitude, knowledge, and skill development of students were also made. Attitudes and social skills are developed through the interaction of ideas among students and teachers. To facilitate the development of the 'right' attitude, the Committee recommended that policies defining desirable personal characteristics should be developed by schools in conjunction with the community. The Advisory Committee defined knowledge as acquired learning. Its application can be demonstrated by students most appropriately on exams. They recommended that core subjects should develop common objectives and grade 12 diploma examinations should be retained (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 10).

Included in this set of recommendations were specific ideas about the nature of all high school subjects. Specifically for social studies, it was noted that it "provides an opportunity for students to develop personal and social attitudes and skills." It was also noted that though the public is generally satisfied with the curriculum, there has been a call for more Canadian history, geography, and economics (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 12).

Subsequently, the Advisory Committee recommended that the junior high program should focus on provincial and national history, geography, and economics; the senior high would approach these subjects from the national and international perspective. With regard to economics, they noted that "Albertans expect that secondary education will prepare students to function in our demanding and competitive economic environment" (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 12) In addition, the program should include a study of interculturalism and citizenship. The Committee recommended that "Citizenship be studied so that students develop an awareness of government structures and the processes of a democratic society in determining social and economic policy." (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 13) It was further recommended that the high school program offer two streams and that social studies be compulsory for the completion of high school (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 13).

3. Ways Students Learn Best

The Policy Advisory Committee made recommendations on student learning. In their view the project of schools is to help each student achieve his or her potential. To this end, schools must be "adaptable, creative, resourceful and committed to learning and improvement" if they are to provide models for students (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 21). Teachers need to be "trained to assist students in coping with constant change." (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 21) It was further recommended that "a program for increasing school effectiveness be implemented [which] . . . promotes effective leadership . . . excellence, wise use of . . . time, and high expectations" (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 21)

4. Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities for Teachers

The Advisory Committee also made recommendations regarding the roles, rights, and responsibilities of students, parents, and all those directly involved in

education, including the provincial government. Recommendations on these matters were also made for those indirectly involved such as business, industry and labour. Generally they suggested that all participants coordinate their efforts and that the defined rights, roles, and responsibilities be supported by a! (Foundation for the Future, 1985, p. 31).

Accordingly the roles, rights, and responsibilities were defined for teachers. Recommendations were as follows:

The *roles* of teachers are to endeavour to instil in their students the desire to learn; to contribute to the establishment of local and provincial education policy and the development of educational programs; to set high expectations of performance and behavior

The *rights* of teachers are to have the professional support of those engaged in the education process Teachers should have the academic freedom to choose the method of instruction . . . and the right to participate in the decision-making functions of the education system.

The *responsibilities* of teachers are to develop a positive and challenging learning environment (Foundation for the Future, pp. 32-33)

5. Mechanism for Feedback on Recommendations

At the same time the Minister made public the Advisory Committee recommendations, he invited written submissions and reaffirmed that meetings would be held around the province to hear public concerns. Mr. King noted that the committee would not prepare another report based on these findings, but would advise him of public reaction. He also stated that after discussions on the recommendations, the Government of Alberta would have a final policy statement prepared for release in the spring of 1985 (Alberta Education, 1985, pp. 1 and 2).

Critical Analysis

The Advisory Committee recommendations for change to educational policy were extensive. The recommendations established the goals or purposes of education, defined the attitudes, knowledge, and skills students should have on

completion of high school, specified course content, and established that effectiveness training for teachers be implemented so that Alberta's schools might become excellent. All these were established without a proper channel or a guarantee of due consideration for views expressed from the perspective of the classroom.

Oddly enough, the Advisory Committee Recommendations stated that teachers should have a hand in setting educational policy as well as developing programs of study. This statement represents a contradiction in the way the Secondary Education Review was conducted and in the Policy Advisory Committee's method of establishing recommendations for change. There is a further contradiction at the level of practice when teachers are given freedom to choose instructional methods; yet, there is ever greater prescription of course content. How can the teacher be responsible for creating a stimulating learning environment when he or she is simply a technician carrying out the wishes of outsiders who have set curriculum policy? To assume that these issues can be ignored reveals a lack of understanding about the classroom and the people who live there.

Promulgation of the New Secondary Education Policy

On June 10, 1985, an Information Bulletin from Alberta Education went out to the Legislative Press Gallery. It requested members of the media from around the province to be at a pre-determined cable systems centre on June 12, 1985, at 1:00 p. m.. At that time, the announcement of the Secondary Education in Alberta: Policy Statement would be made by then Premier, Peter Lougheed, accompanied by the Minister of Education, David King, and Halvar Jonson, MLA for Ponoka and Chairman of the Minister's Advisory Committee.

The Policy Statement that was released at that time defined the principles, goals, and roles of secondary education, and the programs of studies as recommended by the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee and adopted by the Government of

Alberta. A number of key statements were indicative of what the Policy Statement was saying about the nature of change in policy generally, and more specifically as it related to social studies and classroom teachers.

The Policy Statement of June, 1985, had as its focus the student and his relationship with the school program. It stated that schools should prepare students for the future by giving them a foundation of the basics in knowledge and skills. Youth should view learning as a life-long process and "use their education for constructive purposes. They must be creative and innovative. . . . prepared to take risks to achieve goals." (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 4) It is youth who must deal with the societal problems of the future. Students and teachers working together will lead to an excellent education (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 4).

Social Studies was singled out as a priority for further review. The June, 1985, Policy Statement stated that the review would ensure that the curriculum reflected the objectives set out in Appendix A of the policy statement (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 29). After a brief reference to tensions over goals, content, and methods in social studies, the Policy Statement went on to say that the 1981 curriculum utilized the social sciences as the content base for the process of social inquiry in the development of effective citizenship. The new program would develop citizenship skills through an acquisition of facts from a study of mainly history, geography, economics, multiculturalism, and global interdependence (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 33).

The Policy Statement of June, 1985, noted that changes in program would begin almost immediately. It recognized that to achieve immediate change, teachers, students, and parents would have to "accept the challenge" for change and the development of excellence in education. One challenge involving educators, students, parents, and the community would be the review of courses to "ensure that the curriculum reflects the objectives outlined in this policy." (Alberta Government,

1985, p. 29) A second and more difficult challenge will be to make schools "effective." The third challenge will be "to implement improvements efficiently and effectively". (Alberta Government, 1985, p.29) More precisely, teachers must be better prepared to function in their role and carry out their responsibilities (Alberta Government, 1985, p. 29).

Secondary Education Action Plan

On January 21, 1986, Alberta Education made public the "Secondary Education Action Plan." It established a framework for review and development of curriculum, and presented a plan for the implementation of new programs. The emphasis was on the analysis of existing programs in order to assess consistency with the June, 1985, Policy Statement and developing new programs where necessary. The bulk of the Action Plan was focused on the committee framework that would translate the policy into practice. The Action Plan provided for an Implementation Advisory Committee which contained both professional educators and representatives from the public. The Program Coordinating Committees, made up of Alberta Education personnel and educators, would "translate the policies and guidelines into actual instructional programs" (Alberta Education, 1986, p. 6) The document further indicated that Ad Hoc committees and other means of involving the public and private sectors may be necessary in the efforts to develop specific instructional programs. It emphasized that "the practice of making extensive use of many excellent classroom teachers in the development of curriculum will be continued." (Alberta Education, 1986, p. 6)

The "Secondary Education Action Plan" made clear that the role for teachers in the change of educational policy was not in its making, but rather in its "translation" into instructional programs and implementation in the classroom. Teachers would continue in the role assumed appropriate for them.

A Critique of the Secondary Education Review Process

The aspects of secondary education that the Review assessed, the methods used for gathering information and making recommendations for change, and the June, 1985, Policy Statement raise certain questions about the review process. Some questions include: If the public was generally satisfied with their education system, as the Policy Advisory Committee concluded, why did the Committee recommend such extensive changes to educational policy? Why were only certain questions and issues regarding education explored? How were these questions decided upon and who decided them? If the public said extensive change was not needed, why did the Government adopt Policy Committee recommendations and expend so much effort to implement these? Contrary to statements made in academic reports, why was it presumed that a change in educational policy could proceed without the participation of teachers?

1. Goals of Reform

Alberta Education and the Government of Alberta maintained that the impetus for the Secondary Education Review, as well as the recommendations for policy change and the Policy Statement of June, 1985, were a reflection of the public's concerns and views on education. However, some government documents suggest that much of the direction for change came from the government itself.

The Policy Statement makes reference to the Government's White Paper for an Industrial and Science Strategy (1984). This reference seems to have had a significant role in shaping the nature of curriculum change. The Policy Statement notes:

The principles and the objectives . . . in the policy statement are consistent with, and reinforce, the thrust of the Government's White Paper: "Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985-1990" which states that "Education should foster ideas of risk-taking, innovation and the pursuit of excellence". This policy statement sets the direction for change to meet those objectives. (Government of

(Alberta, Secondary Education In Alberta: Policy Statement, June, 1985, p. 4)

The Policy Statement parallels those views. This statement suggests that public participation in the Review process was in effect pre-empted by the views of a few government appointed officials. It also suggests that the kinds of questions and issues examined in the Review process were developed more in light of what the White Paper had to say than what the public was saying. The implication is that views supporting the basic principles set out in the White Paper would be favored over those that diverged.

Further evidence of the White Paper's significance and the Government's control over the direction of the Review process is seen in the definition of what was meant by a better prepared youth. In providing a rationale for the Secondary Education Review, Mr. King stated:

The Government . . . is determined to review . . . education . . . for the purpose of establishing and expressing appropriate goals, content and processes that will ensure a high quality educational opportunity

The Government wants . . . young people to be active members of their community - moral, creative and productive The government wants students . . . to be treated equitably, not equally. The government wants to encourage students to know themselves. . . . respect themselves and others, and we want to treat students with respect. The government wants to encourage . . . the idea of living with, and thriving on challenges. . . . an educational system . . . should promote reasonable, purposeful, and constructive risk-taking to the end that students will take pride in achievement, and work for a better future. (Alberta Education, February 9, 1984, p. 1)

Here the government already revealed its intention to prescribe the "goals, content and processes" of education. In doing so, it would also define the character students should develop and the values they should hold. The implication was that young people graduating from our schools did not exemplify the qualities and values deemed important by the government. Does this mean then that we must return to a situation where 'the curriculum' must be taught in every classroom throughout the province to ensure that all receive the same message, so that they may become what

the government wants them to be? Why is there a statement of what the government wants them to be? Do students, parents, and teachers have no say in what students can become? Has the Government become the spokesperson for all?

Further government direction of the nature of the Review was seen in Mr. King's statement of what should be the four guiding questions for inquiry when he made announcement of the Secondary Education Review. He sought to determine what attitudes, knowledge, and skills students should hold to lead "meaningful" and "productive" lives in a democracy oriented toward a free-enterprise economy. He further wanted to ascertain which of these should be provided by a publicly funded education system. He went on to say that the Review would recognize responsibility for the preparation of young people for adult life. Educators share responsibility with parents and other institutions in the community. Students have a responsibility to ensure the quality of their performance and preparation for life (Alberta Education, February 9, 1984, p. 3).

At that time, Mr. King went on to state that an answering of his four key questions for the Review would raise a number of issues for discussion and debate. The issues he identified included "the need to set standards" of competence, that students have "study and problem-solving skills," that the "competencies, interests, and talents" of students be developed, that students are prepared for a technological world, that our youth are prepared for life after high school, and, specific to social studies, students need to be aware of "Canada's heritage and appreciate the benefits and responsibilities of . . . a free and democratic nation [and] . . . understand the inter-related and competitive nature of the . . . world. (Alberta Education, February 9, 1984, p. 2)

The statements make explicit what the government considered to be important questions and issues for the Review to address, especially as these related to social studies. The Minister's Policy Advisory Committee, charged with making

recommendations for change, eventually developed its own list of four issues to be addressed in the analysis of data gathered in the Review. Their list included the purposes of secondary education, attitudes, knowledge, and skills required of secondary students, how students learn best, and shared responsibilities for education. However, the influence of Mr. King's statements regarding the focus of the review is apparent in the Committee's list of issues for study.

If the Government determined the issues that the Minister's Advisory Committee would examine, as it appears they did, could the Government possibly have directed the expectations and goals the public held for education in the province too? Statements of the public's view on education noted that schools should ensure that students are competent, develop work related skills, hold values akin to our society, study geography, economics, and Canadian history, and be acquainted with the cultures and religions of the world, ie. interculturalism. The public also noted that teachers could become more effective in the delivery of their service. These statements, representing the views of the public, bear remarkable similarity to Mr. King's statement on goals for students and issues that would be debated in the Review.

The statements on public opinion were alleged to have informed the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee's recommendations for the Government Policy Statement on education in June, 1985. The Committee recommended that schools achieve the goals of education adopted by the Legislature in 1978, that values of responsibility and good citizenship be instilled in students, and that standards of excellence be set for all grade levels in secondary education. For the social studies program, they recommended that the focus be placed on Canadian history, geography, and economics as well as a study of interculturalism and citizenship. Schools generally were to commit themselves to excellence, and the roles, rights and responsibilities of those directly and indirectly associated with education were defined. The

Committee recommendations came too hold a great deal in common with Mr. King's statements about what the goals and issues in the Review would be.

2. Participation in Reform

The academic reports conveyed the message time and again that the community, the students, and the teachers must be a part of any deliberations on educational policy. For example, Mitchell noted that students should make meaningful contributions to society. What could be more important than having youth help shape their education? Lawson and Stevenson noted that education ministries have been the political force behind recent changes in education in other countries, however teachers, along with other educators, should be involved in the setting of policy. Butt also stated that there is a need for participatory decision-making so that old bureaucratic lines might be broken down, and out of this process should evolve a common statement of purpose, responsibility, and function. Reform is not something that should be dictated by government departments of education, because institutional change requires time and an understanding of realities that exist in the communities, the schools, and the classroom.

That the message regarding teacher participation in policy-making was received was indicated by statements in support of this idea contained in the Policy Advisory Committee recommendations and the 1985, Policy Statement. However, this message conflicts with other statements that seek to define the role of teacher as a technician. The message also conflicts with the fact that teachers were not specifically invited to help set policy in the Secondary Education Review process.

Critical Analysis

The suggestion that flows from the set of circumstances surrounding the Review is that the Policy Advisory Committee served more to corroborate what the Minister said about its focus, as outlined in his announcement of the Review, than

to report on the findings of a study of education in the province. Government control over the agenda for debate was insured in the announcement of the Review when Mr. King's specified what would be discussed at each phase of the Review and how long its duration would be. Certainly the statements made in the academic reports seemed to make little impact on proceedings. These circumstances imply that the June, 1985, Policy Statement only made official the intentions for change in education policy that members of the Government had in mind prior to announcement of the Review in February of 1984. A further implication is that the Secondary Education Review was really an exercise in legitimizing to the public the intent for Government action in education.

Summary and Conclusions

The Secondary Education In Alberta: Policy Statement of June 1985 seemed to be the culmination of extensive background research to ascertain what the public's expectations and objectives were for the school system. Research, as part of the Secondary Education Review, included a survey of student and public opinion, academic reports on education, readings of documents on education and reform. The information gathered in the Review process was then analyzed and synthesized by the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee developed and used four key questions through which to analyze the data gathered in the Review. Answers to these questions formed the basis for recommendations the Committee made to the Government for its June, 1985 Policy Statement.

The Advisory Committee's list of questions seem to have been shaped by Mr. King's statements on goals in making the announcement for the Secondary Education Review on February 9, 1984. His statements seemed to be informed by the White Paper on an Industrial and Science Strategy (1984) which called for an

education system that promoted "risk-taking, innovation, and the pursuit of excellence." Mr. King noted that the Review would determine what attitudes, knowledge, and skills students living in a democracy should possess. He wanted to ascertain which of these should be provided by a publicly funded education system. He also noted that the Review would define responsibilities for the preparation of young people among groups in the public.

Analysis of events surrounding the Review process suggests that, in seeking public input on educational policy, the Government had shaped public views by making the focus of discussion that which had been presented to them. While lip service was paid to recommendations from academics that teachers be included in policy formation, action was never taken. Public participation and academic reports were used to lend support for the Government's expectations and objectives for education as expressed in the June, 1985, Policy Statement.

The Government assumed it knew what the goals and the agenda for the Secondary Education Review should be when announcement of it was made in 1984. The Policy Statement of June, 1985, reflected those goals.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CONTEXTS OF CURRICULUM POLICY-MAKING IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

My analysis of the Secondary Education Review suggests that policy-makers believed that curriculum policy can be changed without the participation of those engaged in classroom practice. This circumstance suggested to me that there was a need to explore several questions including (1) What is the historical context of changes called for in the social studies through the Secondary Education Review process? (2) How have policy changes informed classroom practice and how has classroom practice informed policy in social studies? (3) What are some ways of conceptualizing the policy-making process in the Secondary Education Review as it relates to social studies? and (4) What assumptions about policy-making were made by policy-makers in the making of social studies curriculum policy in the Secondary Education Review?

The Relationship Between Curriculum Policy and Classroom Practice

A basic tension exists in the social studies, as with all school subjects. The tension is between curriculum policy-making, which operates from one set of theories, and classroom practice, which is informed by another set of theories. Policy-making is the process whereby an official statement on goals and means is arrived at. At the level of provincial curriculum policy-making, the intent is to make common a classroom experience which, by definition of the unique personalities found there, must be particular. In the attempt to mesh policy with learning in the classroom, models of units are developed for teachers to follow. These are usually

accompanied by an inservice program telling teachers what to do. The models are then adapted by teachers to meet the requirements of their students. Classroom practice is informed by the teacher's interpretation of the curriculum policy intention and the classroom context in which he/she works.

A. Historical Context of Curriculum Policy-making in Alberta

Contending Directions in Social Education

Typically curriculum policy-making tends to be task oriented and, as such, ahistorical. It is in response to existing curriculum. In order to provide a historical context for the Secondary Education Review a description and analysis of social studies curriculum in Alberta is provided for the following periods: pre-1930, from the 1930's-1950's, the 1960's, the 1970's, and the 1980's. Historically there have been tensions in the direction of social studies curriculum. These tensions revolve around the following questions: Should social studies content consist of the traditional disciplines of history, geography, and economics; or, should it be interdisciplinary? Is knowledge transmitted to the student or do students construct knowledge? Are curricular decisions affecting practice made centrally by authority, or is it decentralized in the hands of teachers? In terms of evaluation, are teachers accountable to examinations and other forms of external accountability, or are teachers assumed to be autonomous and responsible?

These tensions flow out of two traditional conceptualizations of curriculum. On one hand, the conservative impulse tends to be academically oriented in terms of curriculum content, centralist in the setting of curriculum policy, and supports external accountability. On the other hand, the progressive impulse tends to be utilitarian minded about curriculum content, decentralist in outlook over who sets curriculum, and supportive of teacher autonomy in choices of materials and activities to be used in the classroom. These tensions are not always neatly split between

conservative and progressive impulses in curriculum development, but these have helped to shape education over the past century and still play an important role in determining the nature of social studies today (Tomkins, 1986, pp.225-228).

The conservative approach to education is based on nineteenth century Hegelian idealism. This philosophy holds that ideas transform the material world through a dialectical relationship. Proponents of idealism view pedagogy as a rational science. Under the authoritative guidance of teachers, "children . . . eventually learn to think and act for themselves." (Phillips, 1957, pp. 420-421) Matthew Arnold, one of its strongest supporters, over a century ago noted that the purpose of education "was to know the best which has been taught and said in the world." (Arnold, 1882, p. 5, as quoted in Tomkins, 1986, p. 37) Classical or liberal arts education, with its emphasis on the academic subjects, is most closely associated with this perspective on education.

This view of curriculum was criticized in 1859, by the English philosopher Herbert Spencer. Critical of the practice of deciding curriculum on the basis of tradition, he reasoned that if there is to be a truly useful curriculum then the question must be asked, "What knowledge is of most worth?" He insisted that "we must determine the relative values of knowledge," noting that ". . . that which our school courses leave almost entirely out, we find to be that which most nearly concerns the business of life." (Spencer, 1882, pp. 27-29, 43 and 54, as quoted in Tomkins, 1986, p. 37) Spencer emphasized the importance of helping people adjust to the circumstances of life through a utilitarian or practical curriculum that was based on science.

In the 1880's and 1890's the Progressivists, both as a political movement and as an educational movement in the United States, sought to reform society and make it a better place for the common man. It was a movement based on liberal democratic ideals, especially those of equality and opportunity for all. Support for political and

social reform was gained from Joseph Mayer Rice's series on the corruption of local politicians and the squalorly conditions of some of the schools in the United States, as reported in the Forum, in 1892 and 1893 (Cremin, 1961, pp. 3-8).

Educationally, Progressivism had its roots in Spencer's ideas of the practical curriculum and Pestalozzian and Froebelian notions of the learning process. Pestalozzi and Froebel argued that the child needs to be first engaged at the level of what he/she knows before he/she can progress to the unknown (Tomkins, 1986, pp. 63-65). For this reason, control of some curriculum decisions necessarily had to be decentralized and placed with teachers. John Dewey, a leader in progressive education, continued to apply scientific studies of children to education in the early years of the twentieth century. Progressive educators helped develop the activity oriented discovery learning. The intention was and is to provide both a practical and socially reforming education that encourages the learner's interaction with his world (Tomkins, 1986, pp. 104-106).

Centralization of Curriculum Decision-Making

During the 1800's, forces were at work to centralize and bureaucratize education. Between 1840 and 1880, Egerton Ryerson in Ontario worked to develop a state-controlled curriculum. The means for bringing about central control was through textbook prescription and common examinations. The purpose was to ensure that students came to think, believe, and act in similar ways. At a time when many immigrants were coming into the country and efforts at nation-building were getting underway, the curriculum became an important means for overcoming the local and regional interests of parents and trustees of the many small common school boards (Tomkins, 1984, pp. 4 and 5). Ryerson's efforts were eventually to serve as a role for other provinces to follow, and a tradition was established wherein the setting of curriculum policy is centrally controlled.

Historical Overview of Curriculum Revisions in Alberta

Pre-1930 Reforms

Social studies originated as a curriculum term in the United States at the turn of the century. As early as 1911 it was used there in reference to the practice of combining history, geography, and civics for instructional purposes at the elementary level. By 1930 it was a term commonly used in the lower grades in Alberta. It was not introduced here at the secondary level until 1936 (Tomkins, 1983, p. 5).

In Alberta, a Legislative Committee investigated possible revision of curriculum in 1911 (Goulson, 1981, p. 266) and reviewed curriculum again in 1923 (Alberta Education, 1985, p.2). On both occasions there seems to have been no specific reference made for change to the history, geography, and civics curriculum in the province.

Elsewhere, however, there were calls for change to the emphasis in history and civics curriculum. A 1923 report on the teaching of history and civics was prepared by members of the University of Toronto history department for the National Council of Education. Citing Council documents, Tomkins notes that the historians criticized the fact that moral instruction and the teaching of patriotism and internationalism was being done under the rubric of history. This sort of history, they felt, was nothing short of propaganda and had no place in an academic study. The committee recommended that civics be introduced using a separate primer (Tomkins, 1986, p. 226).

The programme of studies for history, civics, and economics in the Handbook for Secondary Schools in Alberta, 1930, suggests curriculum policy-makers viewed curriculum as a rational, linear project that stressed the efficient learning of content. Though the guide discounted the mental discipline theory earlier promoted by faculty psychology, the emphasis was still on rote learning and mental training (Alberta

Department of Education, 1930, p. 7-11).

History, civics, and economics would put the student "in possession of . . . knowledge of both practical and cultural value." (Alberta Department of Education, 1930, p. 69) History would provide a chronology of the development of civilization. Civics would teach students the function of political and social institutions. Economics would study the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth (Alberta Department of Education, 1930, p. 69).

The curriculum document viewed society as a complex system wherein students needed to be effective and efficient "economic factors" or citizens. (Alberta Department of Education, 1930, p. 7) It noted that "the problems . . . society faces can be solved only by citizens who possess a knowledge of present day institutions and conditions." (Alberta Department of Education, 1930, p. 70) The document further declared that "It is the function of the school to diagnose efficiencies and deficiencies, to assist in the selection of those pupils who can profit by higher education." (Alberta Department of Education, 1930, p. 7) Students minds were to be "trained to clear and honest thinking." (Alberta Department of Education, 1930, p. 70)

Critical Analysis

Documents regarding the nature of social studies curriculum in Alberta during the early years of the twentieth century indicate that it was centrally planned through committees that seem to have been under legislative control. Objective reality (or knowledge as constructed and revealed through the traditional disciplines) was important. The development of subjective meaning or personal understanding and application of knowledge for students was not made reference to in the 1930 programme of studies.

The view of education expressed in the programme of studies suggests that

the teacher was assumed to be a technician/ diagnostician who followed the curriculum as set out in the guide and as further defined by the extensive list of prescribed materials that accompanied it. The student and teacher were both accountable to the Department of Education. Schools functioned to screen youngsters according to their abilities. Students and the system could then work more efficiently and effectively to have each individual find their proper place as one of the "economic factors" in the community. In this context, one might infer that the critical thinking skills that the programme sought to develop meant that students would be aware of societal values and be prepared to defend these (Alberta Department of Education, 1930, p. 69).

During the first part of this century the classroom seems to have been envisioned as a factory in which the teacher applied one part, the curriculum, to another part, the student, to create a finished product, an efficient citizen.

Curriculum Reform: 1930's-1950's

In 1934 a curriculum committee studied the province's educational system and made recommendations for extensive reform (Alberta Education, 1985, p. 3). This movement was primarily spear-headed by bureaucrats and academics. Prominent figures included Fred McNally, Superintendent of Schools, H. C. Newland, a department of education official, and Donald Dickie, of the Calgary Normal School. McNally and Newland were seen as two of Canada's leading progressives. Newland embraced the views of George S. Counts, the American social reconstructionist, who suggested that schools become a place for the building of a new social order. Few Canadian school reformers were prepared to take such a stance. Few had the political will to give such a movement direction, and many believed that while schools might assist in social reform, they should not be the center from which social reform might emanate (Tomkins, 1986, p. 190). Donald

Dickie provided the teacher education that was necessary for the introduction of the enterprise system. She is best known for a treatise on progressive education, The Enterprise in Theory and Practice, and her efforts to train classroom teachers in progressivist methods (Tomkins, 1986, p. 195).

Newland and his colleagues at first tried to convert the existing leadership at the Alberta Department of Education to progressivism. They met with limited success. However, they eventually assumed the leadership roles and influenced the direction of the curriculum. While they were successful in writing their views into curriculum policy, they were not as successful in professionalizing the teaching body as they had once hoped to be. Along the way, professionalizing teachers had become less important than the goal of gaining and maintaining control over the writing of curriculum policy (Tomkins, 1986, p. 192).

In contrast to the curriculum of 1930, which viewed social education as a project in revealing the knowledge of the culture through specified content from history, civics, and economics, the Programme of Studies for 1939 reflected the progressive notion that social education be an enterprise. Knowledge was to be constructed by students and teacher in an interdisciplinary approach wherein history, civics, and economics were combined with content from other social sciences to form social studies. While some units were compulsory, others were optional for students and teachers (Alberta Department of Education, 1939, p.5).

In another marked contrast with the 1930 curriculum, the 1939 Programme of Studies viewed learning as a holistic experience. It required students and teachers to look at the development of knowledge, study religions, develop an appreciation for the aesthetics, and study current affairs. The guide also formalized the coordination of social studies with English. Libraries became important places of inquiry, and teachers were encouraged to bring resource people into the classroom (Alberta Department of Education, 1939, pp. 4-6).

The curriculum guide of 1939 stood in contrast to that of 1930 in still another way. It recognized that knowledge is both objective and subjective. A knowledge of facts was not enough. Students were to interpret and understand as well. Constructive thinking skills were to develop through discovery learning. In evaluation, teachers were encouraged to go beyond the testing of facts and assess attitudes and values, too (Alberta Department of Education, 1939, pp. 4-6).

Teachers were viewed as autonomous professionals who developed curriculum in the classroom. Together with their students, teachers chose from course electives and selected activities and resources for learning. The classroom was to be an experimental lab where students would learn through discovery.

Use of the new methods was voluntary, however teachers were expected to experiment. Special summer classes were held to train teachers in the use of enterprise learning. In 1938, school inspectors declared that, at the elementary school level at least, most teachers were using enterprise and 60 percent of them were successful (Tomkins, 1986, p. 195).

Criticism of the progressive approach to education began during World War II and continued during the fifties. However, what was actually happening in classrooms was apparently not sufficiently threatening enough to warrant extensive curriculum revisions. While the thrust of social studies curriculum policy during the 1950's still reflected the progressive ideas of the 1930's, practice in the classroom remained much as it had before the reform efforts.

At the close of the decade, in 1959, the Cameron Royal Commission, appointed to assess education in Alberta, handed down its recommendations. It called for an emphasis on content over process in the curriculum and advocated examinations to make teachers accountable so as to restore public confidence in the system (Alberta Education, 1985, p. 5). The Commission's recommendations suggested a return to some of the ideas of a conservative approach to curriculum.

Critical Analysis

Some of the assessments of the success of progressive ideas in Alberta's education system seem to have been overly generous. Robert Patterson suggests that a wide gap existed between the rhetoric on the extent of change and what actually occurred in classrooms. This gap can be attributed to the zealous efforts of reformers to promote their ideas and to the critics who later gave the movement more credit than was due. Then too, the criticisms of progressive schools in the United States were often mistakenly applied to schools here. Patterson asserts that schools in Alberta had never implemented progressivist ideas to the degree achieved south of the border. Criticism from parents also helped distort the difference between rhetoric and change. Because schools were different than in their youth, they assumed fundamental changes had taken place (Patterson, 1982).

Problems of implementation had militated against widespread success of the new, progressive approaches. Many teachers did not receive inservice and many more resisted the changes. During the Depression, a lack of money made the development of adequate libraries and the availability of resources difficult. The reforms were never really given an opportunity to work. By the end of World War II a conservative reaction was setting in and traditional academic values remained intact (Patterson, 1982). It seems that the Cameron Commission made recommendations for change more on the perception of what was happening in schools rather than what was actually taking place.

Reaction and Reconstruction: the 1960's

The Program of Studies for Senior High Schools in Alberta for 1961, presented three objectives for social studies and sought to use the disciplines of history, geography, and economics for concept development. One goal of social studies was to develop citizens who had an understanding of change. The

orientation was to the future rather than the present or the past. A second goal was to have students possess values which would direct individual action towards producing what ought to be the values and ideals associated with group living. The study of ancient history and geography were valued for the development of concepts which could be applied to the modern world. A third goal was to prepare students for changes in group living by ensuring they had competence in group participation skills (Alberta Department of Education, 1961).

As the decade wore on, the content of the curriculum was expanded. By 1965, teachers and students were again given a set of electives to choose from as they had had during progressive reforms in the 1930's (Department of Education, 1965). It is quite likely, though, that the availability of resources in particular schools would have limited the choices made. While adding electives to the curriculum gave students and teachers some choice in what was learned, the classroom was not seen as a place to engage in experimental learning. It seemed to be viewed rather as a setting wherein that which was prescribed was to be learned and tested on examinations. The curriculum was set by the department and teachers were given but a few discretionary powers in what was taught.

Changes to the social studies curriculum in the mid-sixties had done little to change the thrust of the 1961 program of studies. Behind the scenes however, criticism had been mounting and a movement to change the focus of social studies was in its early stages. This movement had its beginnings with the provincial social studies subcommittee's efforts to revise the grade 12 curriculum through the revision of an outdated text (Korteweg, 1972, pp. 43-46).

G. R. Davy, of the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta, was appointed in 1963 to aid in revising the Social Studies 30 text. He was asked also to represent the University in the planning of new matriculation courses. A committee of the General Faculty Council was struck to assist Davy. Davy managed

to hold off Department of Education revisions until the different departments in the Faculty of Arts had an opportunity to provide input. In the meantime pressure for revision was mounting from teachers as well (Korteweg, 1972, p. 43-46). When Davy's report was finally prepared, it called for major revisions. It had been suggested that frequent reference to Canada in the curriculum had led to student boredom. In part to alleviate this problem, the thrust of the revisions was to broaden the discipline background of social studies so as to include elements from all the social sciences in addition to the history, geography, and economics that were already there. (Korteweg, 1972, p. 48).

Revision of the Social Studies 30 course fell to the Department of Education subcommittee and a newly formed Interfaculty Committee from the University of Alberta. The Interfaculty Committee developed a course outline which was accepted by the Social Studies Subcommittee. Korteweg attributes this acceptance to the strong role that the Faculty of Education members had in its development. Their authority as academic experts was accepted (Korteweg, 1972, p. 64). After further revisions, piloting, and authorization, the new Social Studies 30 course was ready for implementation in the province's high schools in the fall of 1967.

Revision of the Social Studies 30 program would prove to be only the beginning of major changes to come in social studies curriculum. Laurens Korteweg, (1972) in his thesis A Decade of Social Studies Curriculum Development in Alberta, noted that there were three factors in the 1967 to 1969 period that accounted for the eventual creation of the 1971 curriculum. One was the Alberta Conference on Social Studies in 1967. A second was a re-activation of Curriculum Coordinating Committees and the pressure for change that they brought to bear. The third was an environment receptive to change (p. 93).

The purpose of the Alberta Conference on Social Studies was to discuss revisions to curriculum. Participants were invited guests, including representatives

from the Department of Education, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, as well as Educational Administrators and Department Heads or Social Studies Coordinators. No members from the general public were invited. Conference proceedings extended over a two week period. The observations and recommendations coming out of the conference were to lay the foundations for a major revision of social studies curriculum. The thrust of the recommendations was for a new curriculum to consist of a values based social inquiry with emphasis on preparing youth for a rapidly changing world. No longer would there be prescribed content or texts, and the use of external examinations were to be minimized (Korteweg, 1972, p. 96, and 98-106).

The next step was to implement the recommendations. For this purpose the Curriculum Coordinating Committee was re-activated. An ad hoc committee of the Social Studies Curriculum Coordinating Sub-committee was to provide a framework from which to make curricular revisions. This "Committee of Five" included T. Pendergast, a teacher, as Division I representative; M. Pedde, active with Social Studies Council, was the Division II representative; N. Kozak, a principal, represented Division III; and B. Benning represented Division IV. Evelyn Moore from the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Calgary served as an alternate. Within a six month period this group developed the basis of the new social studies program for Grades 1 -12 (Korteweg, 1972, p. 123).

A mood that embraced change in education and society generally, both here and across the border in the United States, was also conducive to change. Curricular changes had occurred in other subject areas following the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957. It was now time that social studies had its opportunity. Ted Aoki of the University of Alberta and prominent figure in the changes commented as follows:

... the whole atmosphere of curriculum development in the sixties, particularly across the border, where they were pouring millions of dollars into curriculum

revisions had an exhilarating effect. A somewhat similar development as the Social Studies 30 program had by 1967 developed in B. C. and Manitoba. The initial impetus for a problem oriented social studies program had already picked up momentum. (Aoki, quoted by Korteweg, 1972, p. 109)

Aoki also noted that the leadership of T. C. Byrne, who was Chief Superintendent of Schools at the Department of Education, further fostered change. Byrne was interested in decentralizing curriculum, especially in social studies, and consequently had a strong influence on the course of events (Korteweg, 1972, p. 109).

Critical Analysis

The wording of the 1961 social studies curriculum seemed to reflect a tension between the Cameron Commission's call for more emphasis on knowledge revealed through the disciplines, and the earlier emphasis on progressive ideas in social education. The goal to have students develop appropriate values and ideals for modern living, through a study of history and geography, was a view from the former. The two goals which viewed social studies as a preparation for change and the future was representative of the latter.

Indeed the Cameron Commission recommendations were to eventually fall by the wayside during the course of the sixties. The trend that developed was towards grandiose change efforts patterned after those in the United States where the Sputnik scare in 1957 saw government money directed at improving the education system. The change effort in Alberta's social studies curriculum was spearheaded by experts at the universities and bureaucrats at the Department of Education. That they could plan the curriculum change in the absence of public and political input attests to the faith that was placed in its developers. The question was, would teachers and the public accept the changes in approach to social studies envisioned by the policy-makers?

Radical Reform: the 1970's

The 1971 curriculum was the product of an effort to radically reform social studies curriculum. The handbook for the revised social studies in secondary education was distributed to the schools during the summer of 1971 (Korteweg, 1972, p. 220). Strongly progressive and social reconstructivist in orientation, its developers had begun from the premise that social studies knowledge was in a rapid state of change. Appropriately, the document was entitled Responding to Change. The handbook reflected the complex nature that undergirds the curriculum development process. Since the underlying assumption was that teachers were autonomous professionals who were competent and willing to design curriculum programs, much of the guide was devoted to explicating how teachers should go about developing their own inquiry programs.

In an approach that viewed knowledge as socially constructed, the units in this curriculum were organized around value issues where students and teachers were invited to explore conflicts and come to an understanding as to how values influenced actions. Students and teachers worked through values clarifying strategies to arrive at personal and social values. Valuing, based upon Raths' and Simon's model, conceptualized the process as involving choosing, prizing, and acting (Alberta Education, 1975, pp. 17-19).

Concepts drawn from the social science disciplines were to be learned in a recurring spiral process that attempted to match the sophistication of the concept with the developmental stage of the child. Through an understanding of concepts, students would be able to generalize about their world. As teachers worked deductively from generalizations to concepts and facts, students worked inductively from facts to concepts and generalizations. Cognitive and affective objectives were to be expressed in behavioral terms as teachers proceeded to develop their units. In the absence of prescribed resources, teachers had the responsibility of acquiring

the necessary materials for inquiry learning of values and social science concepts.

Dissatisfaction with Curriculum Policy

Widespread dissatisfaction with the social studies curriculum soon became evident. Educators complained that they had to develop their own materials without the necessary preparation and time. The public complained that there was not enough prescription of content and resources.

In response to these complaints, an evaluation of the 1971 social studies curriculum was commissioned by Alberta Education from L. Downey and Associates. The report, titled The Social Studies in Alberta—1975: A Report of an Assessment, commonly known as the Downey Report, gave an assessment on the fidelity of program implementation and made recommendations for improvement. In its findings the Downey Report praised the general orientation of the values curriculum, but it was also found that the 1971 program had, in effect, not been implemented in the classroom. Major reasons cited for this situation included a lack of resources, a lack of community involvement in developing the program, inadequate time allotments for program development, a lack of teacher inservicing, and a general unpreparedness among teachers to deal with the tasks of using the inquiry method (Downey, 1975, p. 11-20).

A number of recommendations for the improvement of social studies education were made in The Downey Report. While many of these eventually fell by the wayside, Mawson (1982) in her thesis, Social Studies Curriculum Development in Alberta, asserts that the one most closely adhered to was that reassessment and revision of the Master Plan should involve all stakeholders (p. 236).

This assessment of social studies in the province did not come as a surprise. The 1971 curriculum had faced strong criticism since its release in the schools and The Downey Report reconfirmed this. What The Downey Report did was provide a

focus for the discontent and set the stage for further change (Mawson, 1982, pp. 94-97).

At the time The Downey Report was in the works, fresh currents of criticism from progressives and conservatives alike were beginning to flow. Social Studies curriculum was not only under attack in Alberta but across Canada. The criticisms originated with a number of events in the late sixties and early seventies that contributed to a strong interest in Canadian content among the various publics. Canada's Centennial celebrated in 1967 was one source. Another was the publishing of A. B. Hodgetts' What Culture? What Heritage? in 1968. Hodgetts was critical of how ill informed both students and teachers were about Canada. Yet another source was the Canadian Studies Foundation formed in 1969 as a response to Hodgetts' concerns. Its purpose was to increase and improve the quality of teaching of Canadian content in schools. Additional pressure was brought to bear by Project Canada West, a regional centre for the Canadian Studies Foundation created in 1970. Then too, Mel Hurtig, an outspoken nationalist, released results from a survey of high school students. The results served as a reaffirmation of the belief that students were not knowledgeable about Canada (Mawson, 1982, p. 141).

Across the country and North America, other sources of pressure for change in curriculum were based in calls for more prescription and the back to the basics movement. Economic constraints and declining enrollments had served to reduce school budgets. These factors helped bring about a change in public priorities. The demand was for a reduced but more rigorous curriculum and a recentralization of curriculum policy decisions (Tomkins, 1986, p. 315). Again the groups calling for the changes were many and, if not strong in number, they were strong in voice.

In Alberta, a number of major interest groups took aim at three main areas of dissatisfaction with the education system generally and the 1971 social studies curriculum in particular. These included the lack of Canadian content in the

curriculum, the need to get "back to the basics" provided by a focus on history, geography, and economics, and the lack of structure and prescription (Mawson 1982, p. 235). These criticisms mobilized both those with progressive and those with conservative leanings to call for reform. A list of some of these includes: students, parents, teachers, superintendents, school trustees, the universities, the Chamber of Commerce, the media, the general public, the Canadian Legion, a host of other groups, and prominent members within the government itself (Mawson 1982, pp. 124 and 126 and 146-160).

Growing Government Involvement in Educational Policy-Making

By the mid seventies, tensions between the conceptual focus of the curriculum policy in place and that demanded by various stakeholders was evident. Curriculum of the late sixties and early seventies was interdisciplinary, knowledge constructed in focus, somewhat decentralized in its making, and gave to teachers a degree of autonomy. Such a conceptualization of curriculum was in conflict with those who now wanted to reduce the curriculum by focusing on certain disciplines, valued a knowledge as revealed focus, and demanded more central control of curriculum and external accountability of teachers.

Governments across North America were beginning to mold the pressures for change into one common message. In the belief that the policy-makers in the education department bureaucracies had failed to produce the curriculum the public and influential politicians demanded, governments responded in the only way they believe they can, with studies and follow-up legislation. Centralization would place curriculum policy-making in the hands of politicians where it rightfully belongs, it was argued, since they are responsible to the public.

In Alberta, it became apparent that the government not only had to but wanted to become involved in determining the direction of curriculum change. This

government interest is shown in the throne speech of February 24, 1977:

There will be a reassessment of the goals and objectives of our basic education system, and the priorities that should be given to certain goals and objectives. A shift in emphasis to basic skills may be indicated. . . . Further consideration will be given to the place of provincial examinations in our educational system. (Hansard, 1977, p. 2, as quoted in Krawchenko, 1983, p. 28)

The statement indicates the government's intent to set basic skills objectives and then to follow these up with provincial exams to test for the achievement of these.

The Premier of the day, Peter Lougheed, took a personal interest in what was happening in education. His interest was indicated by a statement he made in the Legislature in 1978 on the Worth Commission Report (1972), compiled before his government came to power in 1971. He stated:

I reread that document, and I came out with a concern with the underlying philosophy that was there.

. . . the commission [did not have] the parameters of goals of education and goals of schooling that I believe were necessary to put that public in-put into a report of the nature that was presented.

Frankly . . . I have felt apprehensive . . . of not having such goals, which leaves it beyond the scope of the public policy of this Legislature, to the conclusions . . . of the educational establishment in the province . . . to determine on an *ad hoc* basis what should be the basic course content and curriculum development of our education system. It strikes me . . . [as] a rudderless situation for the very important . . . area of . . . public policy in education. (Hansard, 1978, p. 1189, as quoted in Krawchenko, 1983, p. 28)

Lougheed was attacking the direction the document had given to education in the seventies. The Premier also emphasized his personal beliefs on the nature of educational policy and his dissatisfaction with the situation where educators had control over what he perceived to be a matter for the public domain. This statement implies that Mr. Lougheed would have given some of the direction for a move to establish legislated policy parameters for education.

The Premier went on to chastise educators who had objected to government intervention in the policy process to that point in time. He commented:

Mr. Speaker, a few but not many educators . . . have expressed some concern at government interference in . . . education. I am glad that it's a small . . . number of people . . . because I think it's disturbing. I would have thought that they would welcome this Legislative Assembly to be debating the question of what the goals of schooling and education would be. I think that the vast majority do. (Hansard, 1978, p. 1189, as quoted in Krawchenko, 1983, p. 28)

As the Premier saw it, centralization of policy-making in the hands of the Legislature was a public good. For educators however, much was at stake. Debate of the goals of schooling and education in the Legislative Assembly spelled the end to the educational bureaucracy's control over policy-making and a tradition that extended back to the days of Egerton Ryerson in the mid 1800's in Ontario.

Other government members also voiced their opinions on the need for change. Ken Paproski, MLA Norwood, expressed the sentiment of some when he attacked the weaknesses of what he perceived to be a progressivist education system in Alberta. He noted:

. . . progressive education; the classroom where the teacher must not fail normal children . . . because the poor student may feel rejected A generation where courses are geared to the lowest common denominator in a classroom [is] a serious concern, Mr. Speaker. . . . teachers . . . are losing empathy from the public . . . because they are part of these front-line workers who are really doing the job for us

. . . a system has developed . . . a . . . 'progressivist' which is in many ways diametrically opposed to the structured, traditional education system

If you have too many frills, they damage the basic program because the basic programs become ineffective. (Hansard, 1977, p. 1353, as quoted in Krawchenko 1983, pp. 39 and 40)

Paproski's statement suggests that progressive education was a contradiction to the traditional subject-centered curriculum Albertans were accustomed to. His comment also suggested the need to reduce the content and get back to the basics in the curriculum. The nature of Paproski's statements reveal that not only was the Premier concerned about educational policy, but so were the members of his caucus.

The government responded to the public and government member concerns

in a number of ways. In December of 1975, Julian Koziak, the then Education Minister, announced the creation of the Curriculum Policies Board (CPB). It was to replace the existing Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Boards in order to give public representation in curriculum policy development and to better coordinate the curriculum from grades 1-12 (Mawson, 1982, p. 99). The new CPB had sixteen members including eight professional educators: one from Alberta Education appointed by the Minister; one from the ATA; one from post-secondary institutions selected by the Minister; and three practicing teachers selected by the Minister. The other eight members included: one from the Alberta School Trustees Association; one from the Legislative Assembly appointed by the Minister; and six citizens at large selected by the Minister (Mawson, 1982, p. 100).

Another measure the government took to bring about a change in curriculum focus was to make the subject area coordinating committees responsible to the Curriculum Policies Board. The Social Studies Curriculum Coordinating Committee (SSCCC) was responsible for developing policy, but CPB approval was required for authorization (Mawson, 1982, p. 102). In her thesis, Mawson chronicles the conflicts the SSSCC had with the CPB in formulating the 1978-Interim Curriculum (1982, p. 217-225).

The government also commissioned a number of studies in educational policy areas. The Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement, reporting in 1978, recommended periodic achievement testing at various grade levels and a return to Departmental examinations dropped in 1973 (Goulson, 1981, p. 292 and 293). Another report for the CPB had a similar focus. This was prepared by Jake Harder of the University of Alberta, entitled Alberta Education and Diploma Requirements: A Discussion Paper Prepared for the Curriculum Policies Board, or more commonly The Harder Report, was released in 1978.

In yet another move to gain control over educational policy, the Legislature

adopted a policy statement on the goals of schooling and education in May 1978. In speaking to the adoption of these, then Education Minister, Julian Koziak, noted that this was a response to the concerns of fellow government members and the public. He commented:

I think the six goals of schooling [and ten goals of education] . . . capture the comments of Hon. members during the debate over the past two years and represent what the people of the province of Alberta feel schools should in fact do for the students . . . (Hansard, 1978, p. 1178, as quoted in Krawchenko, 1983, p. 28)

The implication of Koziak's remarks is that the government viewed the adoption of the policy as an important step in providing the assurance that educational policy would no longer solely lie in the hands of educators.

Critical Analysis

The government was both reactive and pro-active in its effort to gain legislative control over educational policy (Mawson, 1982, p. 238). In the reactive phase the public had applied pressure for change, particularly in social studies. The government responded by commissioning studies in social studies and later on student evaluation. This action implied that the government was searching out the public's mood to see what was expected. Yet in making the prepared reports of the commissions the focus of discussion, it also shaped the nature of the public's views. This action was proactive. The direction given by the government in the throne speech and statements made by the Premier and some members of the Legislature expressing concern that educational policy should be set by the bureaucracy is a further indication of the proactive role the government took in changing curriculum.

Consolidating Changes: the 1980's

Criticism from educators, the public, and government members led to the replacement of the much maligned 1971 social studies curriculum in 1978. Entitled,

1978 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum—Interim Edition, the new handbook provided a new balance between the tensions at work in curriculum policy-making. As such it maintained a multi-disciplinary inquiry approach from the 1971 curriculum and prescribed topics for each grade. For each topic a social issue and competing values were defined. Value, knowledge, and skill objectives associated with these were also given. The topics were to be developed in a progression through an eight step inquiry model that could lead to personal or social action and an evaluation of that action. Resources were defined and listed as prescribed, recommended, or support. The guide also explained that formative and summative evaluation aids students and teachers in assessing their achievement of the objectives, measures the effectiveness of learning, and teaching styles and determines the suitability of the materials used.

The Interim guide reflected some of the forces that had been at work in society, schools, and the government during the 1970's. While it retained an interdisciplinary approach, the curriculum was more prescriptive in content and resources as had been requested; yet, students and teachers were able to construct their knowledge within the parameters of the prescribed units. The 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum, with the exception of minor changes, was a reflection of its 1978 predecessor.

Throughout the process of consolidating the social studies curriculum changes of the 1970's, in the 1978 and 1981 documents, there was also a continuous pressure to gain more control over the curriculum policy-making process. This control was mainly accomplished through a series of advisory committee studies on various topics. Some of the significant ones were the Minister's Advisory Committee for the Canadian Awareness Project and the Tri-Partite Committee on Inservice Education. The Minister's Policy Advisory Committee's control over the Secondary Education Review fits in with this approach.

In what seems to have been a response to the calls for more Canadian

content in the curriculum, a Minister's Advisory Committee for the Canadian Awareness Project was appointed in May of 1980. The purpose was to test students, from all three levels of schooling, on their knowledge of history, geography, and citizenship. The results of the test were interpreted to mean that students in the province were deficient in their knowledge of facts in history, geography, and citizenship. Reporting in May of 1981, the Committee recommended that all those who have an interest in Canadian Awareness evaluate the role they can play. The report recommended that the delivery processes of social studies be examined and that consideration be given to replacing the present social studies curriculum, so that the type of history, geography, and citizenship presumed valuable by the committee could be given proper emphasis. It also called for an examination of teacher preparation for their role as leaders in heightening Canadian Awareness. The report concluded that the committee's recommendations had implications for all citizens of Canada in an increasingly interdependent world (Goulson, 1983, p. 78).

Another committee set up by the government at this time also made recommendations that seem to have had important implications for the Secondary Education Review process. The Tri-Partite Committee On Inservice Education recommended in October of 1980 that program changes follow an announced schedule of dates and procedures so that participants can coordinate their efforts with those of the proposed changes. The Tri-Partite Committee also recommended that communications outlining changes in program be made appropriate to the audience. It further recommended that a representative provincial committee manage program implementation plans (Goulson, 1983, p. 77).

The announcement of the Secondary Education Review on February 9, 1984, was yet another step in the process of centralizing control over the setting of curriculum policy in the hands of legislators. In making the announcement of the Secondary Education Review, the Minister identified issues to be discussed and a

schedule of dates for events in the process was made.

Reflecting the Minister's statements on goals made in the announcement of the Review, the June, 1985, Policy Statement called for a reduced curriculum with emphasis on the traditional disciplines. In social studies this meant a focus on Canadian history, geography, and economics in what seemed to be a response to the public's and politician's earlier dissatisfaction with the 1971 curriculum and the recommendations of the Minister's Advisory Committee for the Canadian Awareness Project. The further shift in emphasis away from inquiry learning to that of the acquisition of facts suggests that once again knowledge as revealed had gained precedence over knowledge as constructed. Calls for more prescription in course content only served to support such a notion.

Communications regarding the results of the studies conducted in the Secondary Education Review were funneled through the interpretation of the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee. Implementation of the June, 1985, Policy Statement was to be managed by yet other committees struck for that purpose as recommended by the Tri-Partite Committee.

Critical Analysis

Begun in the seventies the process of extending political control over curriculum policy through commissioned studies continued into the eighties. The Minister's Advisory Committee for the Canadian Awareness Project was an effort to bring change to the content of social studies curriculum. Given that the mandate was to assess the level of knowledge students held in history, geography, and citizenship, the Canadian Awareness Project Committee could hardly recommend anything but increased emphasis on these in social studies. As a basis for public discussion, the report could do little more than spark calls for more emphasis on knowledge in these subjects, such had already become the agenda for debate. Had the mandate

included an assessment of student knowledge in anthropology, sociology, and political science, conceivably the recommendations and subsequent public outcry would have been for greater emphasis on knowledge from these disciplines as well. Seemingly innocuous at first, the recommendations of the Committee were to bear remarkable similarity with the direction given for social studies in the June, 1985, Policy Statement.

The recommendations of the Tri-Partite Committee On Inservice Education seemed also to have had an impact on the manner in which the Secondary Education Review was conducted. Provision of a time line for change may be a reflection of good management skills, but an underlying assumption in such action is that the change of program equates with the change of people, and both can be strictly controlled. A further assumption is that participants should have no input on proposed changes; they should accept these without question. The fact that the results of the research for the Secondary Education Review were written for public consumption without specific information from the reports being provided seems to coincide with the notion of control of information as recommended by the Committee. Control of research, analysis, and implementation for the Secondary Education Review remained under the control of provincial committee as had been further recommended by the Tri-Partite Committee.

While the stated purpose of the Secondary Education Review was to assess public opinion in an effort to set policy, the Education Minister's statements regarding the goals of the Review and the issues to be discussed implied that the government did as much, if not more, to shape public opinion than it did to assess it.

Calls for greater prescription in social studies were contradicted by still others in the Policy Statement of June, 1985, which suggested that students and teachers should be risk-takers and that students should develop critical thinking skills. Teachers are to be creative and take responsibility for the learning in their classrooms;

yet, the Policy Statement's reaffirmation of achievement exams indicates support for external accountability. On the one hand, the June, 1985, Policy Statement suggests teachers should participate in setting curriculum policy. On the other hand, teachers were not invited to directly participate in the setting of policy in the course of the Secondary Education Review. This lack of participation suggests that politicians had taken the view that the role of teachers in the bureaucratic machinery is to implement policy.

During the late seventies and the early eighties politicians had gained a measure of control over the setting of curriculum policy. Forces with opposing conceptualizations of curriculum had converged at the juncture of the need for change. Having placed curriculum policy-making directly in the political arena, politicians have tried to strike a balance and, in the process, they seem to have created unworkable contradictions in policy.

Summary and Conclusions

A historical contextualization of the Secondary Education Review and the subsequent Policy Statement of June, 1985, suggests that tensions in the patterns of curriculum policy-making have been at work in shaping the nature of the Review process and the policies flowing from it. The conservative impulse tends to view education as a project to be achieved through the traditional disciplines wherein knowledge is revealed, policy-making is centralized in education ministries, and teachers are held externally accountable. The progressive impulse seeks an interdisciplinary approach wherein knowledge is constructed, and decisions regarding materials and activities are left to teachers who are seen to have some autonomy.

Regardless of whether policy-making has been centralized so that legislators and bureaucrats in the Department of Education have control, or decentralized so that educators from the university have greater input, the classroom teacher has had

minimal direct participation in the setting of provincial curriculum policy. It would seem that conservatives and progressives alike believe that teachers are incapable of contributing to education at this level.

Prior to and during the early thirties, social studies programmes reflected conservative notions of curriculum. Following a wave of progressivist domination in educational thought in the mid-thirties, the curriculum of the late thirties reflected progressive ideals in education. Over the next two decades, poor funding, a lack of sound implementation by teachers who struggled to understand its methods, and growing public criticism with its accomplishments eroded what support there had been for progressive education. While the intent of the progressive policy-makers in the Department of Education was to give teachers decentralized control over curricular decisions at the classroom level, the policy was the product of centralized decision-making. Had teachers participated in the larger policy-making decisions, many of the pitfalls of progressive education might have been avoided.

In time, decentralized decision-making in the hands of classroom teachers was blamed for what was perceived to be a decline in the quality of education. To remedy the problems, demands were made for more centralized decision-making in curriculum policy, a focus on the traditional disciplines as opposed to interdisciplinary studies, and greater external accountability through exams. These sentiments were reflected in the 1959 Cameron Royal Commission's recommendations.

While social studies curriculum of the sixties reflected elements of conservative and progressive views on curriculum, a strong resurgence of progressive education in the latter part of the decade saw a new social studies curriculum in 1971 that reflected those views.

The 1971 social studies curriculum led to a great deal of criticism from many groups, including the government of the day. Criticism of the poor implementation of the 1971 curriculum along with calls for more Canadian content, prescription of

resources and learning activities, and criticism of policy-making by bureaucrats prompted the government to attempt to take greater control over the goals and processes of education. A new form of centralized policy-making was to take hold of the classroom.

Attempts at gaining control were made in several ways. One way was through a restructuring and reorganization of curriculum policy committees beginning in December of 1975. A second way was to make subject area coordinating committees responsible to the Curriculum Policies Board. A third way was through the Legislative Assembly's May 1978 adoption of the goals for education. A fourth way was by acting on but also creating public support for action through commissioned studies into various aspects of education. This strategy was used with the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement report and The Harder Report on diploma requirements in 1978. After public discussion, Alberta Education would adopt the recommendations of these committees as policy.

The strategy of establishing politically controlled committees, lending legislative support for action, and testing and developing a constituency for policy initiatives had worked in the establishment of achievement exams in 1978 and demands for more emphasis on knowledge in history, geography, and citizenship in 1981. While this approach to policy-making was not new in other policy fields, its use by government to set educational policy in Alberta, to this point, had been limited to dealing with specific concerns in education. The Secondary Education Review was to be a large scale test of this policy development framework wherein the government both responded to and lead public opinion. If successful, the government would achieve its goal to entrench legislative control over policy-making in education.

The history of social studies curriculum in the province of Alberta suggests that curriculum policy-makers have assumed that a change of policy will immediately result in a change of practice in the classroom. Over the years, failures to implement

or sustain the direction of new programs in the classroom has led to frequent efforts to shift the focus of policy. Frequent efforts at change have been done on the further assumptions that clearer statements of policy or yet another infusion of enthusiasm accompanying new policy will somehow bring about the change that policy-makers intend. Underlying these assumptions about policy and change is the larger assumption that curriculum policy can be developed without the participation of classroom practitioners. The repeated efforts to rework policy suggests there is a need to not only view policy as informing practice, but to have classroom practice inform policy as well.

B. Conceptual Context of Policy-making in Alberta

Traditionally the setting of Alberta's curriculum policy has been centralized in the hands of policy-makers outside the classroom at the Department of Education and at the universities. More recently, it is becoming apparent that politicians are seeking to gain more control over curriculum policy-making on the assumption that their responsibility to a voting public makes them the more appropriate to determine curriculum policy. The Secondary Education Review appears to be a part of this process.

An historical account of social studies curriculum policy in the province suggests that policy-makers, whether they be bureaucrats or politicians, are removed from the classroom and operate from their own conceptions of what classroom practice should look like. Because they are removed from the classroom, they cannot bring the perspective of the practitioner to the setting of curriculum policy. As policy-makers, politicians who now set curriculum policy tend to assume that educational policy-making is the same as policy-making in other fields.

In order to understand how governments think about policy-making, it is useful to look at models of policy-making. This will help to interpret the Secondary

Education Review as an example of contemporary policy-making procedures. Four policy-making models are explored with reference to the Secondary Education Review. These are the systems model, the rational model, public choice, and incrementalism.

1. Systems Model

A policy field, such as education, can be studied in terms of the ideas, structures, and processes that predominate in society. The systems model seeks to account for the content of policy by exploring the complex interplay of the elements of the social, economic, and political system with that of a policy area such as education. At the same time it is a means for explaining the processes of policy-making (Doern, 1972, p. 2).

The systems model notes that the social and economic characteristics of Canada form the environment in which policies are made. Some of the major features include Canada's historic relationships with the United States and Britain; French-English relations and the changing ethnic compositions; the geography and spatial/physical realities; capitalism, the relationships among economic classes and state intervention; and foreign ownership and Canada's reliance on foreign trade (Doern and Phidd, 1983, p. 24).

Ideas refer to both the broad normative content of policy and the ideas which are central to the existence of key institutions. The following is a capsulized view of persistent and recurring ideas in Canadian public policy:

Dominant Ideas

- efficiency
- individual liberty
- stability
- redistribution and equality
- equity
- national identity, unity and integration [nationalism]

Ideas Central to Key Political Institution

- centralization and decentralization
- "one man one vote" and majoritarian government
- responsible and accountable Cabinet-Parliamentary government
- individual and collective ministerial [and trustee] responsibility

- regional diversity and sensitivity [regionalism]
- the policy-administration dichotomy and political control of bureaucrats by elected officials
- freedom of a responsible press media
- freedom of association and the right to be consulted. (Doern and Phidd, 1983, p. 60)

An additional dominant idea is that of the policy paradigm. The paradigm provides a set of guiding principles or assumptions for directing action and suggesting solutions in a policy field. In this way, the policy paradigms act to filter out certain options. Once entrenched, these change very slowly. The public as well as the bureaucrats or professionals have been educated and socialized to think and act in certain ways (Doern and Phidd, 1983, pp. 57 and 58).

As normative content in public policy, the dominant ideas often direct political action. Each set of dominant ideas carries with it implications for different processes in relations between institutions. Changes in the ascendancy of dominant ideas will shift aspects of policy-making away from one institution towards another. The ideas linked directly to institutions give them form and frame the rhetoric emerging from them as the participants seek to influence and shape policy. Both the dominant ideas and the ideas central to political institutions have inherent contradictions. Contradictions which further serve to complicate the policy-making process.

The systems model further holds that public and private institutions both embody the ideas and form the structures of society. Some of these institutions in the Canadian setting are federalism, Cabinet-Parliamentary government, interest groups, the electoral system and political parties, and the mass media (Doern and Phidd, 1983, pp. 27 and 28). These organizations embody the ideas in society. The organizations interactively engage in policy formulation or try to influence that process. Frequently the bureaucracies of the line departments establish the basis on which politicians set goals and it is almost always the responsibility of the bureaucracy to provide the means for achieving the goals they set. Those in the

political realm are not above committing themselves to achieving goals and providing the means whether or not they know or believe that these are within the scope of their 'real' power to do so (Doern and Phidd, 1983, pp. 218 and 219).

While the appearance may often be that policies are the result of single decisions brought about through the action of a single constituency, this is a rarity. Most policies are made as part of a set of related decisions taken in a complex environment of conflicting ideas promoted by competing interest groups. The systems model views decisions as causal, creating uncertainty, and often holding strong elements of risk. Successful policy-making includes decisions that address certain concerns, encourage understanding, and develop support for policy outcomes (Doern, 1972, p. 2).

The processes of making social or economic policy are valued and disputed as much as are the goals and outcomes of policy. Policy instruments including exhortation, regulation, taxation, expenditure, and public enterprise are often at the center of debate. Processes which govern institutional relationships can also be a source of controversy. Taken together these processes play significant roles in producing legitimate policy that is acceptable to the public (Doern and Phidd, 1983, p.36).

Application of the Systems Model

The systems model demonstrates that the educational policy field is part of a larger policy milieu in Alberta, Canada, and North America. Historically, certain ideas about education have evolved. Sometimes these have stood in opposition to one another. For example, the conservative impulse has tended towards the centralization of decision-making and the preservation of stability through an emphasis on tradition and academics in education. In contrast, the progressive impulse has tended to seek decentralization of decision-making and pursue change

in an effort to change society through a practical curriculum.

Swings between progressive and conservative orientations in education have been part of the social, economic, and political factors at work in the society. Policy-makers in the seventies and eighties seem to have assumed that battle lines in the setting of curriculum policy have been and will remain drawn between progressive and conservative views on curriculum, however it would appear that new alliances have been forged around the issues in education.

Within the framework of an elected, responsible and accountable Cabinet-Parliamentary government, an important tradition governing the processes within the structure evolved. During the last century and the early part of this century, educators gained the power to set the goals and objectives for schooling and education with the understanding that an equitable, efficient and quality education would be provided. Legislators and the public assumed for the most part that bureaucrats would perform their duties and they took on the role of supporters in the educational enterprise (Kirst, 1984, pp. 32 and 33).

Beginning in the 1950's, the 'silent' partners began to question what was happening in education. The launching of Sputnik left the American public wondering why schools had failed them. Canadians joined American voices for curriculum renewal. Few questioned whether the failure had anything to do with schools in the first place. During the sixties it was believed that money could solve all the problems. With massive government money flowing in to education, accountability became a necessity. The questioning was especially vigorous when it was found in the early seventies that many of the programs had failed or made little difference in the classroom.

Here in Alberta the 1971 social studies curriculum became a source of concern. The social studies handbook was the product of an elite group in the educational bureaucracy who had worked in isolation from the public and the

majority of teachers. Many interest groups and the media leveled their criticisms at the content and organization of the social studies. The Downey Report served to focus these concerns.

In the more conservative climate that was evolving during the late seventies, the curriculum was seen to be too progressivist in its outlook. Politicians and the public assumed that the bureaucracy had failed to deliver on an effective and efficient curriculum. Efficiency and effectiveness after all are two dominant ideas that provide a criteria for determining what constitutes good public policy in Canada. Furthermore, the impression among interest groups and politicians alike was that curriculum policy-making had become too decentralized. Ideas about the role of government as silent partner in the educational process had shifted to where the government was expected to be an active participant. Here in Alberta and across North America, governments had to and were willing to respond to public criticism, not only in social studies, but in all areas of curriculum. Politicians and the public seemed to assume that curriculum policy change could best be brought about through political control over commissioned studies whose recommendations would be then translated into legislative action.

In arriving at a new curriculum policy in the June, 1985, Policy Statement, the government both sought and shaped the nature of public input and support for it. The ideas of various stakeholder groups were solicited, academic studies were commissioned, and literature in education was perused. The data was analyzed and synthesized in accordance with government set pre-determined guidelines and recommendations for change were finalized by a government appointed committee. The choice to use the instrument of regulation led to the Policy Statement of June, 1985. Interpretation and implementation of that document was left to the bureaucrats at Alberta Education and teachers who, it seems, are viewed by politicians as part of the bureaucratic process.

2. The Rational Model

The rational model stems from economic and scientific notions of decision-making. It has been used to describe the ideal and the actual behaviors of those in decision-making roles. The policy problem is seen to go through several stages including:

- identification
 - definition
 - alternative search
 - choice
 - implementation, and
 - evaluation (feedback and learning)
- (Doern and Phidd, 1983, p. 95)

These features illustrate the rational approach to solving a problem or reaching a goal. Identification of the problem involves the recognition that an issue exists or can be developed. The identification of an issue may emerge from sources of pressure or from within a government or department. Definition of the problem involves shaping and giving meaning to it for the policy-maker. Definition of a problem also includes a setting of objectives and a look at consequences to avoid. A search for alternative ways to solve the problem means that each approach must be weighed for its costs and benefits. When the actual choice of solution has been made, resources must be made available. Sometimes new legislation or definition of procedures is required. At other times existing legislation allows the choice of actions to be carried out. The intent of implementation is to resolve the problem in a reliable and predictable manner. Evaluation is an attempt to determine if the policy choice has met its objectives and so determine if further action is required (Doern and Phidd, 1983, 95 and 96).

Application of the Rational Model

Criticisms over the amount of Canadian content and the degree of prescription, and the 'public' demand to set standards and get back to the basics in curriculum appears to have led politicians to assume that the problem in education centred on the question of who should have control? Having so defined the problem, they searched for ways to achieve legislative control over curriculum policy. The Curriculum Policies Board, the Minister's Advisory Committee On Student Achievement, the Harder Report, the Minister's Advisory Committee For The Canadian Awareness Project, the Tri-Partite Committee On Inservice Education, and the Secondary Education Review were rational steps in attaining that goal. Each committee searched for a policy choice then followed up with policy statements based on the recommendations made by the reporting committees. In making the recommendations of the committees or the policy statements the agenda for debate, the government received feedback and at the same time developed public support for the implementation of the proposed program.

Outwardly the Secondary Education Review appeared to be a very rational process. Mr. King, in making the announcement for the Review, identified the four guiding questions that would be answered through research. The Review promised to be a seeking out of alternatives for future policy choice. However the subsequent statement of government wants and the definition of what issues were to be debated suggested that the Review was an exercise in legitimating the objectives the government announced prior to the Review. The Minister's Advisory Committee recommendations confirmed there legitimating role. Their recommendations bore a striking similarity to what Mr. King had identified as the wants and issues the government sought to have addressed in the Review earlier.

The public was given a 'voice' in policy-making, though that voice was often channeled to debate only certain aspects of the issues at hand. The public, for its

part, seemed to have assumed that their demands were listened to and the expression of the general will had informed policy.

3. Public Choice Model

The theory of public choice has its origins in economics, the roots of which go back to Adam Smith. Associated with the neoconservatism of the eighties, public choice has been used to attack the expansion of social programs in the 1960's and 1970's (Doern and Phidd 1983, p. 143 and 144).

In its application, the theory extends the idea of self-interest behavior of individuals to that of public choice. Individual decision-makers maximize their self-interest rather than pursue the public interest. Through the achievement of personal goals the public's interest is served. For politicians, their self-interest means first and foremost that they gain re-election. Appeals to the voter, especially the marginal swing vote, is an important strategy (Doern and Phidd, 1983, p. 145).

The policy-making process can be viewed as a framework wherein a series of interlocking games takes place. Douglas Hartle suggests there is the special-interest group game, the political game, the bureaucratic game, and the media game. The behavior of the participants is best understood in terms of the self-interest goals of each of the sectors' leaders (Doern and Phidd, 1983, p. 144).

Application of Public Choice Model

Politicians are accountable and responsible to the public. In terms of the public choice model, the politicians self-interest in maintaining popularity and the need to be seen to be in control of the bureaucracy coincided with the public demand for change in curriculum in Alberta. The Premier, then Peter Lougheed, and other government members had expressed their personal intentions to gain control over the setting of educational policy. To gain control meant the government had to move into an area where no strong precedent existed nor had policy guidelines been

established.

In terms of the interlocking games of the public choice model, the political game of meeting the politicians' self-interest meant also that the self-interests of the leaders of the pressure groups and the media had to be met so they too would look good in the eyes of their publics. These leaders and their publics in turn would lend further support for government efforts at controlling the leaders in the bureaucratic game.

The Secondary Education Review was a major effort to ensure legislative control over the definition of educational policy and prescription of curriculum content. It would also serve the politicians' self-interest to be seen to be in control of curriculum policy-making in what they and some members of the public assumed to be a process out of control.

4. Incrementalism

The theory of incrementalism is based on a critique of the rational model. Charles E. Lindblom explains that politicians are not given a problem, but rather have to identify and formulate it. Gathering the data is impossible on the scale called for in the rational model and there are difficulties experienced when attempts are made at organizing goals or values (Lindblom, 1968, pp. 13-17).

Governments operating in the real world will opt for an incremental approach to decision-making. Faced with uncertainty and political risk in the presentation of fundamental policy change, politicians make choices from alternatives that offer slight shifts from past policy. Incrementalism is less systematic and more intuitive than the rational model. This feature allows for quick readjustments when conditions change (Adie and Thomas, 1982, p. 98).

The incrementalist adopts several strategies. First, he does not strive for the best of all possible policies. He settles for less while continuing the search for

alternatives. Second, the deliberate choice of a weaker policy allows for the 'next chance' when he can do better. Third, the incrementalist uses 'feedback' to improve policy and derive the benefit of appearing to be one who listens to public concerns. Fourth, the incrementalist deals with existing problems rather than attempting social reconstruction. Fifth, he understands that policy-making is serial and sequential. Therefore there is not just a second step but rather many in an endless chain. Sixth, 'bottlenecks' and 'delays' are inevitable in complex policy-making. The incrementalist uses these to reassess and decide whether to proceed as planned or shift slightly in another more favorable direction (Lindblom, 1968, pp. 24-27).

Incrementalism offers flexibility and minimizes conflict. Dissensus, or division between stakeholder groups, is brought on by major policy changes where participants will inevitably make great gains or losses. Policy-making should reduce and manage conflict, not create it (Adie and Thomas, 1982, p. 99).

Application of Incrementalism

Incrementalism suggests that the definition of problems in education in the seventies and eighties did not mean these could be outrightly addressed with legislation. To do so would have marked an immediate and fundamental shift in policy that could have led to open conflict. Policy-making should not promote conflict. Accordingly, Alberta's politicians might have assumed that curriculum policy change is most effectively and efficiently introduced in incremental steps.

Gaining Legislative control of educational policy and ultimately the mandate to prescribe curriculum required the use of the political process to create legitimacy for that control. The legitimating process involved making exhortations and statements about future directions for education in the legislature as a means for establishing the primacy of the issue at hand. Comments in the media and media focus on the issue further strengthened this primacy. Giving the appearance of strong public support

for action was essential. Restructuring the Curriculum Policies Board and Commissioned studies rounded out the legitimating process.

As part of an incremental process, the Review reaffirmed the recommendations and government policies that had been derived from previous committee work. Subsequent to the Review, the government policy statement in June, 1985, made the goals of education and schooling, earlier adopted by the government in 1978, the basis of the educational system. Achievement testing and Departmental examinations were to continue. These were established in the 1978 recommendations of the Minister's Advisory Committee and The Harder Report respectively. Consistent with the recommendations of the Minister's Advisory Committee For The Canadian Awareness Project of 1980, the Policy Statement of 1985, stated that social studies was to consist of history, geography, economics, and citizenship education. In adhering to the 1980 recommendations of the Tri-Partite Committee On Inservice Education, Alberta Education developed communications about the results of the Secondary Review to suit the audience, in this case the general public. The actual contents of reports on the surveys of public opinion or those of the academics were not made available to the public. Consequently the public would not be able to draw its own conclusions from the results of these studies.

Critical Analysis

The Policy Statement of June, 1985, and subsequent efforts to implement it have marked a fundamental change in who sets curriculum policy in Alberta. This shift in who sets policy occurred in a complex environment of ideas, institutional structures, and processes, wherein the policy-makers seem to have assumed a rational approach to policy-making. It was also an environment where it is suggested that the playing out of the self-interests of politicians, interest groups, the media, and the bureaucrats was assumed to result in a serving of the public's interest. In some

sense the change also seems to have been brought about in incremental steps beginning with The Downey Report on social studies curriculum in 1975, which piqued the interest of politicians, and culminated with an expression of their will for curriculum policy in the June, 1985, Policy Statement.

In the making of curriculum policy, politicians seem to have assumed that the old tensions between conservative and progressive ideas on curriculum are still at the heart of policy in the eighties. In so doing they also seem to have made the assumption that the progressive tendency to support decentralized decision-making meant that teachers had participated in formulating the policy of the strongly criticized 1971 curriculum. Believing that the educational bureaucracy had failed them, and teachers were assumed to be part of the bureaucracy, teachers were not invited to participate in the setting of curriculum policy through the Secondary Education Review. Under this assumption, it seems that the role of teachers is to implement what the politicians and the public decide for policy, but not lend their knowledge of the classroom to its making.

Politicians might have assumed their task was completed when the Policy Statement of June, 1985, was made. The public and stakeholder groups might have assumed that they had informed the policy development process in a highly significant way and thus were also finished their task when the Policy Statement was handed down. However, the history of social studies curriculum development in the province suggests that policy-makers can not assume that the process of policy development in curriculum is complete when policy statements are made. Policy-makers cannot assume, whether by bureaucratic decree or legislative action, that curriculum policy will be implemented in the classroom. Policy-makers from outside of the classroom should also not assume that teachers are part of the bureaucratic machinery that responds only to their demands. Though we as teachers may be accountable to the policy-maker, we have a responsibility to meet our students

needs first and fore- most.

Summary and Conclusions

When policy-makers make a statement of policy, they intend to set the goals for education and the means for achieving these. An account of the historical context of curriculum policy-making in Alberta, demonstrates how conservative and progressive impulses have worked during the course of this century to shape the nature of social studies and educational policy. The historical account also indicates that, regardless of whether the centralizing or decentralizing forces are in control, the classroom teacher has had little direct participation in the setting of curriculum policy. Yet, in the context of classroom circumstances that teachers interpret policy and direct their classroom practice. Teachers work on the basis of theories that they have formed from their practice. However well-meaning the policy-makers from the Department of Education, the universities, or most recently, the legislators, they work on the basis of theories informed by their practice, not the teacher's practice.

Analysis of the historical context of change in social studies curriculum suggests that while the lines between opposing conceptual perspectives in curriculum policy-making have not always been clear, during the 1970's and 1980's the lines have become more blurred than they have at any other point in time. Forces that were once in opposition to each other rallied around the demand for more Canadian content, more prescription, and an effort to get back to the basics.

As a result, the kinds of changes called for and the processes used to bring about changes in policy have come to reflect the contradictions that have gone into their making. A classroom perspective on what might be reasonable policy has been avoided. Teachers have been on the periphery of the policy-making process in the 1980's, and the history of social studies curriculum in the province suggests this is not an uncommon place for us to find ourselves.

Policy-makers, both past and present, seem to have assumed that curriculum policy informs classroom practice; but, practice informs policy only minimally. Failure to recognize the importance of allowing practice to inform policy has led to a situation where frequent efforts are made to redefine policy. This seems to be done in the hope that policy might yet one day determine practice.

Analysis of policy development through the four conceptualizations of policy-making suggests theories that explain the ways in which legislators operated in the process of the Secondary Education Review. This analysis also suggests a number of assumptions that were made by politicians in establishing legislative control over the setting of educational goals. Since the educational bureaucracy had failed to provide the policy that the public wanted, it was assumed that effective and efficient central control in the hands of politicians would meet public demand. The even larger assumption made was that curriculum policy-making can be patterned after other policy fields.

Models serve as heuristics or theories for understanding the events around us. As such they allow us to see certain aspects of reality and they filter out others. Using any one model alone distorts reality. Such an approach, for example, would give the impression that policy change progresses in certain well-defined ways. In fact it is multifaceted with one process being layered over by others. When policy-makers view the classroom through models developed from their own practice and ignore the theories of teachers, they have a distorted view of reality in the classroom. Teacher participation in the policy-making process is essential in providing a balance with the view from beyond the classroom walls. If this is to be achieved, those who make curriculum policy must reexamine their understanding of its relationship to classroom practice.

CHAPTER 4

THE SECONDARY EDUCATION REVIEW: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT AND THE PROCESS

My personal experience as a teacher and an analysis of the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice through the history of social studies curriculum development seems to indicate that educational change cannot be decreed. However, policy-makers continue to operate on the assumption that they can affect change in the classroom in this manner.

The Secondary Education Review in Alberta, along with similar reviews in other parts of Canada and the United States, originated in a dissatisfaction with existing curriculum, including social studies. The purpose of this chapter is to further inquire into the assumptions policy-makers made about the content of curriculum policy as it relates to classroom practice. This inquiry is guided by the following three questions: (1) What were some criticisms of existing curriculum? (2) What were some characteristics of curriculum policy changes in the 1980's? (3) What resistances were there to the changes?

A critical analysis of the criticism and the content of the reform proposals in this province and elsewhere leads to further questions about the curriculum policy-making process as it relates to classroom practice. These questions are dealt with in the second part of the chapter. Here my inquiry is guided by four questions: (1) What are the historical and contemporary trends in curriculum policy-making? (2) What objections were there to the policy-making processes? (3) What were some characteristics in the implementation of policy changes? and (4) What sort of rationality underlies the policy-making process?

A. The Content of the Secondary Education Review Proposals

Criticisms of Existing Curriculum Policy

Atmosphere of Reform: Conservative and Progressive Pressures

Within the historical context, curriculum policy-making can be viewed as cyclical. The cycles represent a correction period as power and priorities shift. These cycles are brought about by significant social and economic events. Writing from an American perspective, Michael Kirst notes that conservative political movements gained ascendancy in the 1890's in response to massive immigration, again in the late 1950's when Sputnik was launched, and in the early 1980's when economic recession was experienced. During these periods the curricular focus was on academic standards and traditional subject matter. Economic liberalism or progressive movements were in the ascendent as a response to the depression in the 1930's and the need to expand and guarantee civil rights in the 1960's. During these times emphasis was on opportunity, equality, and vocational preparation. The functions of schools were expanded to meet the concerns of minorities (Kirst, 1984, pp. 18 and 19). Each successive wave of reforms left schools with elements of those changes that became part of the routine of the system (Kirst, 1984, pp. 7-9).

Kirst views the curriculum reforms of the 1980's as part of a cycle. However, there seems to be more than simply an ebb and flow in these reforms. Wilson, for example argues that parental groups, who organized themselves in the late seventies for the purpose of influencing the direction of education, had come to see schooling in their own self-interest (1984, p. 15). These groups did not have similar goals for schools. But, Neo-conservatives and neo-progressives created new alliances on the common agreement that schools must become more effective and focus on teaching the 3 R's or the 'basics.' Progressive, liberal, and radical educators sided with conservative technocrats who favored a cognitive skills approach to curricula in hopes of improving the future opportunities of youth. Other liberals and

radicals joined forces with heritage-minded conservatives to promote critical thinking and content in curriculum. Together they joined forces with nationalists to pressure for more Canadian and cultural content. Christian fundamentalists believed that courses should reflect their religious and cultural values. Still others wanted the arts promoted or wanted to ensure the retention of the practical arts such as home economics and industrial arts. Ironically, a movement that called for a narrowing of the curriculum was in effect broadening it, as each group scrambled to incorporate subjects they believed to be basic (Tomkins, 1986, p. 318).

Specific efforts by governments to address concerns about curriculum began as early as 1976. In that year, British Columbia's Minister of Education stated that the public wants the government to "take a more positive role in defining what should be taught in our schools and in assessing the results of the teaching." (Hughes, 1980, p. 22) In that same year, Ontario's Minister of Education stated, "We are going to take a much firmer grasp of what is actually being taught in the . . . schools of this province." (Hughes, 1980, p. 22) The Government of British Columbia met the public 'demand' in its 1976 release of the document, What Should Our Children Be Learning? Goals of the Core Curriculum. Ontario's Ministry of Education conducted a review of its secondary programs and, in 1981, released the findings in its Report of the Secondary Education Review Project. The report also spelled out what should be taught in the schools of that province.

The 1983 report of the United States National Commission of Excellence in Education, entitled A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, influenced educational policy in both the United States and Canada. On the understanding that the demand for standards of achievement and prescription had existed before the Commission's report, it is perhaps more accurate to see their recommendations as reflecting and focusing political and social sentiment than leading it. The report signaled the American government's recognition and

interpretation of a problem as well as its support for a rational approach to policy-making. The report also was a signal that reformers would no longer be drawn from within the educational bureaucracy alone. Educators would be joined by those appointed by legislators to direct legislative reform to education.

Efforts to change or reform curriculum frequently began with a set of objectives which served as a criteria for reviews of the education system as it existed. Across North America, the late seventies and early eighties were marked by a plethora of studies into high school education. Frequently the kinds of action prescribed by provincial ministries here in Canada bore remarkable similarity to those in the United States (Tomkins, 1986, p. 373).

Kirst's suggestion that the Secondary Education Review in Alberta was simply part of the cyclical nature of change in education is attractive, because it explains the complex change process in such simplistic terms. Policy change is cyclical and directed by either conservative or progressive ideas on curriculum. This is the kind of understanding of change in curriculum policy-making that politicians seem to have held as they endeavoured to set new policy.

It is more accurate, however, to view the Secondary Education Review in Alberta as part of a larger reform movement that swept across North America. This movement consisted of new alliances between conservatives and progressives who sought to change curriculum through political control of the processes. This circumstance suggests that the old dichotomy was breaking down and no longer serves as an explanation for the direction of change.

Government initiatives in the setting of curriculum policy were claimed to respond to public 'demands.' Calls for the teaching of core subjects, expressions of hope for the future opportunities of youth, and for more Canadian and cultural content in social studies were part of the rhetoric of the new alliances in reform. The Secondary Education Review documents reflected these calls. In Alberta the

Minister's Policy Advisory Committee recommended expanding the development of critical thinking skills across the curriculum, the inclusion of courses on values and life skills, and an option program to go along with "core" subjects. This move suggests that the curriculum in Alberta is likely to be expanded rather than reduced.

It would seem that efforts to change the curriculum were in effect working at cross purposes. This circumstance suggests that policy-makers could no longer assume that calls for curriculum policy change were based on clear cut traditional patterns; yet, there seems to be little or no evidence to suggest that policy-makers here or elsewhere made any concerted effort to understand the undercurrents of reform. It also suggests that perhaps politicians, who must retain popularity with the voter, are not the most appropriate policy-makers for education. In serving their own self-interests, politicians are not necessarily serving the interests of the public. The writing of curriculum policy and efforts to do all things for all people do not appear to go hand in hand.

Characteristics of Curriculum Change in the 1980's

Towards Core Curriculum and Excellence

The typical government response to public 'demands' for education, real or perceived, was to recentralize and institute what came to be the 'buzz' phrase, "core curriculum." British Columbia and Ontario lead the way in implementation of core curricula. In 1977, British Columbia's Ministry of Education released a policy statement in which three levels of curriculum were established: that which must be taught because it is fundamental to the skills and knowledge of students; that which should be taught; and that which is optional (Hughes, 1982, p.586). British Columbia also adopted the Provincial Learning Assessment Program which tested students on the general objectives in the major subject areas. Though these were less restrictive than the minimum competency tests that swept the United States around the same

time, the intent was to make an assessment of the quality of education students received (Resnick, D. P. and L. B., 1983, pp. 178-180).

As early as 1977, the Minister of Education in Ontario acknowledged that the basics had to go beyond the 3 R's. Eventually Ontario's curriculum was defined in quite general terms wherein the high school credit requirements for core subjects were spelled out (Wells, 1976-1977, p. 4-6).

In 1979, Newfoundland completed its review for curriculum reorganization. Responsibilities for all participants in education were defined. Some objectives remained subject specific while others like critical thinking were to be part of each subject area. The final report also addressed the kinds of values and attitudes that educators in the schools should have (Newfoundland Department of Education, 1979, pp. 2-5).

In the drive to get back to the basics, mathematics and writing skills became embedded in a larger milieu of reform. The focus came to be directed at student excellence in every endeavour. Paradoxically, parents, teachers, and politicians seemed to ignore the pursuit of excellence in their own fields (Hall and Carlton, 1977, pp. 2-3).

Alberta's policy-makers seem to have assumed that solutions found elsewhere would be appropriate for the resolution of problems assumed to exist here. Not unlike British Columbia and Ontario, the Alberta Government emphasized the importance of teaching "core curriculum" in its June, 1985, Policy Statement. In the absence of a detailed assessment of what schools were teaching, policy-makers seem to have assumed that schools were indeed teaching something other than "core curricula." On the matter of setting standards, the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement and The Harder Report, in 1978, both recommended Departmental examinations in Alberta in an effort to assess the quality of education as had been done in British Columbia. The Policy Statement of June, 1985, following the Review,

reaffirmed support for core curricula and testing, and noted that there was a need to set standards of excellence.

Through the Secondary Education Review, Alberta spelled out the responsibilities of all participants in education as Newfoundland had. This act seems to have been completed on the belief that participants were not fulfilling their responsibilities and that legislative decree would somehow make them see the error of their ways. Alberta, like its provincial counterpart, also made the development of critical thinking skills a project for all subject areas on the apparent assumption that schools were not already doing this. On the further assumption that teachers were not "effective" and schools were not "excellent," the Alberta government prescribed that they become so.

Resistances to Change in the 1980's

Doubts Over the Pursuit of Excellence and Concerns for Elitism

The rhetoric of government initiatives in changing curriculum policy stated that politicians were responding to public demand and the apparent need for change. A survey of public opinion in Alberta suggested that the public was generally satisfied with the educational system as it existed (Alberta Education, 1985, p. 21). National surveys in Canada and a study conducted in Ontario arrived at similar conclusions. Unlike in the United States, parents in Canada seemed content (Tomkins, 1984, p. 318).

If parents in Alberta and across Canada were satisfied with their education systems, it seems unlikely that the government emphasis on excellence and the raising of standards was necessary. Some educators expressed the concern that the emphasis on more compulsory courses and examinations would result in an elitist system (Gilliss, 1986, p. 5).

A variety of provincial assessments of achievement in the subject areas were

conducted in the seventies and no conclusive evidence could be found to demonstrate that competence in basic skills had indeed declined over the years. In Alberta, the report of the Minister's Advisory Committee On Student Achievement concluded in 1979 that there was little or no evidence to indicate that standards had fallen (Van Manen, 1980, p. 54).

Some educators argued that, if there were differences in achievement, these were brought on by the retention of more students in school and the changed socio-economic and ethnic composition of students (Tomkins, 1986, p. 318). In her report commissioned for the Alberta Secondary Education Review, Sheehan noted that, since the sixties, schools had retained a broader spectrum of youth. The retention of these students raised question about the purposes of the secondary school: Do schools serve mainly an academic purpose, or are they to provide an education for all students of secondary school age? (Alberta Education, 1985, pp. 7 and 8) The expansion of curricula in the wake of calls to get back to the basics would suggest that the policy-makers in Alberta and elsewhere tried to come down firmly on both sides of the issue.

In 1977 Ontario conducted the Interface Study to assess the academic transition of secondary students to post-secondary institutions. The study found that making cross generational comparisons was virtually impossible. They did find that students of the late 1970's were from a different segment of the population than previous generations. They also found that teacher assigned marks co-related as highly with student performance at university as did the departmental exams of 1956. There were, however, serious variations in marks from school to school. The study also noted the contradiction wherein universities were not willing to accord teachers in secondary schools the freedom to set marks, yet they claimed that freedom for themselves (Tomkins, 1986, p. 319).

Ontario's Interface Study and other studies on student achievement and

public perceptions of education supported those who believed that the standards issue had been exaggerated (Tomkins, 1986, p. 319). The assessment reviews served the political function of demonstrating to the public that provincial ministries were concerned about student achievement. Though evidence seemed to disprove allegations of reduced standards, governments proceeded as though the allegations were valid.

Pedagogical Concerns

In addition to those who doubted that standards had fallen, some educators felt that the pursuit of excellence ignored conditions of teachers work. Groves, for example, asserted that the pursuit of excellence will fail as long as teachers continue to face a host of supplementary activities along with their regular teaching duties. Concurrent with all the reports into education has come an explosion of professional development projects that place more demands on teachers' time. Furthermore, in the pursuit of excellence it must be realized that there are students who are already doing the best they can given their life circumstances. The emphasis on excellence implies that teachers should ignore their responsibility to show empathy towards those who cannot or will not meet the standards. In Groves' view, many teachers not only want to teach kids to think but to feel as well (1986, pp. 17-19).

Many teachers are not pleased with the emphasis on compulsory academics. Like Groves, Sharleen Chevraux found that teachers generally believe that setting higher passing grades cheats weaker students. Should failure rates increase, she argues that one of three things will happen: the Department will lower expectations; courses will be watered down; or teachers will change their interpretations of what a passing mark of 50% means (1986, pp. 14-16). The caution implies that the belief that stiffer standards will automatically lead to better performance is false. Chevraux's suggestion further implies that policy-makers in government do not appreciate the

current conditions in the classroom, because they assume that excellence can be achieved through the setting of test standards.

In terms of social studies specifically, the new Alberta curriculum will focus on the what rather than the how, or the content over the process. Parsons and Carson argued against the policy-maker's assertion that understanding gained through factual knowledge precedes inquiry. This, they say, has not been substantiated. They questioned how one can be critical when he/she must accept what he/she has been told as though it has always been so. In their view, excellence means more than simply having teachers impart to students a knowledge of the past. It requires concern for social issues and an opportunity to explore these through the inquiry method as was found in the 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum (Parsons and Carson, 1986, pp. 21 and 22).

One educator took exception to the narrowing of curriculum objectives in the effort to get back to the basics. Anderson believes the Premier and the Education Minister should have to prove their claims that more academic courses will better prepare students for the competition for jobs. Citing a recent American study done by John Hopkins University, Anderson argues that business is looking for students who can read, do arithmetic, and have more of a practical background. The skills and knowledge gained from core subjects, subjects that schools take seriously, are not top priority in business (Anderson, 1986, pp. 22-24). As a consequence, future high school graduates will experience frustration and disillusionment with the education system when they enter the job market.

Arguments that curriculum reform is a necessary response to declining standards appear to be questionable. Nevertheless, governments assumed they should have a role in setting standards whether or not clear evidence supported their actions. The Secondary Education Review in Alberta and similar reviews in Canada and the United States can be understood to have been, in part, efforts to develop a

constituency of support for the setting of standards in education on the assumption that tests are a measure of excellence.

While some educators were critical of those who contrived support for reform, others questioned the goals of excellence and the implications it held for students and teachers alike. The consensus of these educators seems to be that, while those outside the classroom have set new goals and the means for achieving them, they have not properly examined the implications of the reforms they expect. The policy-maker's imposition of new constraints on top of existing ones, without an understanding of the classroom context, suggests that teachers must either become less empathetic towards students, or erode the goals of the reform so that students do not become so discouraged that they lose hope. Teachers teach more than the kinds of knowledge and skills that can be measured on exams. They teach attitudes and values towards learning and living both in what they do or fail to do. Had the Secondary Education Review in Alberta actually assessed what students and teachers were already achieving, policy would not have been made on the assumption that students and teachers had not been working to the best of their ability within the context that they find themselves. The actions of the government indicate that at least some of its members believed that excuses were not required for changes in policy.

B. The Secondary Education Review Process from a Policy-making Perspective

An analysis of the the content of the Secondary Education Review indicates that the kinds of curriculum policy changes called for in Alberta were similar to those found across North America. The discussion on content also suggests that the policy-making process adopted in this province was not unlike that found in other jurisdictions as well. What follows is an analysis of the processes used in the

Secondary Education Review.

Historical and Contemporary Trends in Curriculum Policy-Making

Prior to the 1950's reforms tended to come as a response to public pressure. The period was marked by relative stability and goals consensus in education. Policy-making in Canada and the United States generally occurred within the bureaucratic hierarchy and conflict was resolved within those structures. During the 1960's policy-makers increasingly turned to administrative models to rationalize the process of policy-making, or make the process one of planned action. Although administrative authority declined, the influence of parents, students, teachers, and other stakeholder groups rose. A political rationality took hold, wherein the various interests groups came to view the setting of educational policy as something that could be influenced by power politics and the lobbying of policy-makers. The consequences were first a proliferation in the number of courses in the curriculum and then, as public demand changed in the late 1970's, an attempt to reduce course offerings and define core curriculum (Tomkins, 1986, pp. 427-428).

The 1960's were marked by the massive government efforts at planned action in social and economic policy. These efforts led to a reliance on social scientists as policy advisors to the point where they were institutionalized in that role. This arrangement led to "the professionalization of reform" (Moynihan, 1969, pp. 21-37). Since reform was their stock and trade, these advisors came to measure success by the number of projects they could initiate (Moynihan, 1973, p. 546).

The task of making change in reliable and predictable ways has more recently fallen to special committees appointed by government. Present day governments are dealing with parallel and conflicting influences when they frame policy. These committees are used as means for identifying, expressing, legitimating, promulgating, and testing policy. The most common function of a committee is "... to assess the

market for emerging ideas, and to mobilize support for them (Kogan, 1982, p. 62). This function cuts across the main structural processes by which norms are set and the means by which norms are translated into policy and action. In education, they look at policy as "encompassing rather than discrete, expressive and even declamatory, and not solely analytic." (Kogan, 1982, pp. 2 and 3) As one former official said, "If you haven't a clue about the answer, don't set up a commission." (Kogan, 1982, p. 61)

In Alberta, committees have had an increasingly important role in policy formation since the mid 1970's. Committees were initially used to develop policy in specific areas. For example, the Minister's Advisory Committee on Students Achievement and The Harder Report of 1978 worked on policy as it would relate to testing achievement. The Minister's Advisory Committee for the Canadian Awareness Project reporting in 1980 recommended more Canadian content in social studies curriculum. However, the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee for the Secondary Education Review had the mandate to establish policy across the curriculum. This marked a significant change in the use of government appointed committees. Such power in the hands of a committee was unprecedented in this province.

The use of committees allow politicians control over the policy-making process. Political domination of the Secondary Education Review was clearly established in its announcement when the Minister stated what goals and issues would be discussed. He also stated that the data gathered from public surveys, commissioned studies, and perusals of relevant literature would be analyzed and synthesized by the ministerially appointed Policy Advisory Committee of which he would also be a member. This arrangement ensured that the contributions of experts and bureaucrats, and this includes teachers, would remain under political control. The arrangement also served as a means for the development of support for the Government's objectives as well as a way to get feedback on public opinions about

that direction at the same time. Such political control of the reform process ensured that the recommendations for policy change coming out of Review would neatly dovetail the goals or objectives the Minister announced for it at the outset.

The establishment of political control over reform suggests that politicians and the public are suspicious of bureaucrats and experts who, in their estimation, failed to deliver what has come to be interpreted as excellence in education. Committees have been used to circumvent bureaucratic control over policy by developing a constituency of support for initiatives while, at the same time, monitoring the opinions of Albertans. After all, the appearance of being in control is important in the practice of governing.

Objections to the Policy-making Processes

The effort to concentrate decision-making in the hands of politicians is not uncommon across Canada. This phenomenon seems to be part of an "overt power play" to restore the tradition of centralized curriculum. The past fifteen years of decentralization were an aberration rather than the norm (Hughes, 1980, pp. 21 and-23).

Here in Alberta a number of educators were critical of political encroachment on the setting of curriculum policy. Van Manen asserted that those informed about the complexities of policy-making can only stand in awe at the simplistic ways in which politicians have come to determine the public will. While there exists in government the rationale for such changes, it must at the same time have the support of the public. Embedded in technical industrial society is the willingness to rely on such shallow rationalisms as cost/benefit analysis, systems theory, accountability, measurable goals, efficiency, productivity, pruning of frills, and uniformity of standards (Van Manen, 1980, p. 35).

Whether or not the Secondary Education Review was an expression of the will

of the people is questionable. The government had not sufficiently demonstrated the need for change, yet it proceeded as though it had. Parsons and Carson noted that the whole Review process, rather than seeking consensus among the public, had the tendency to isolate them into pressure groups.

For social studies educators, the changes envisaged by the Secondary Education Review raise two concerns. One concern is that changes are being made outside the established curriculum development process. The second and closely related concern is that the people who are making the changes in social studies curriculum are unknown and unfamiliar with the traditions, the research, and the pedagogy of social studies (Parsons and Carson, 1986, pp. 20 and 21). The new process in policy-making implies that curriculum will now, more than ever, be an imposition from outside the teaching community, and that those making the policy are not part of the educational bureaucracy traditionally charged with that role.

Educators, and particularly those from the university, have taken exception to the policy-making process of the Secondary Education Review. A tradition had developed whereby experts from the universities worked on committees with bureaucrats from departments of education in efforts to develop curriculum policy. In Alberta the 1971 social studies curriculum had been formulated in this way. On one level there was criticism of the political control that now challenged the role experts and bureaucrats in policy-making. Educators at the universities have an autonomy from the system that allows them to speak out against encroachments on their position, whereas the bureaucrats at Alberta Education have too much at stake to be vocal. Teachers, students, and parents are not unaccustomed to being left out of the policy-making process, and so tend to lack the will and the forum to be critical.

On another level, certain academics are becoming increasingly concerned about the degrees of bureaucratic rationality permeating society. Historically, bureaucracy and accountability were created in response to and as a defence

against the arbitrariness of appointed officials in the past (Adie and Thomas, 1982, pp.76-82). However, technical industrial society has come to rely so heavily on the logic of rationally planned action emanating from bureaucracy that we only see escape from it in terms of extending greater control, which serves to further tie back into it. Ever increasing degrees of rationally planned action are created by our demands for control and accountability.

Paradoxes in the Implementation of Policy Changes

By-passing of the bureaucracy in reform efforts may also be seen as part of a movement towards an anti-bureaucratic utopia which began in the 1950's (Diament, 1972, pp. 3-34). In a movement that has been cultural as well as political, bureaucracy has come to embrace all that is wrong in society. There has been a growing fear that bureaucracy will destroy what is of political and social value. This fear is shared by both right and left wing political pundits.

Centralizing tendencies are viewed with ambivalence. Conservatives favour it when it extends control, but disfavour centralization when it extends liberal values. Liberals favor centralization when it can further social goals, but disfavor it when it extends control for the purpose of control (Bardach, 1977, pp. 139-140). Both sides supported centralizing the control of curriculum policy in the 1980's in an effort to reduce the bureaucracy. Conservatives wanted control over what they perceived to be a bureaucracy out of control and liberals or progressives saw this as a means to further their goals of a quality education for our youth. However, centralization requires ever increasing imposition of controls. Because maintaining such control is impossible in the normal routine of operations over time, conservative and liberal reformers should have reason to be cautious of greater centralization (Bardach, 1977, pp. 139-140).

Ironically, in trying to reduce bureaucracy, the curriculum reform movement

had to turn to bureaucracy, albeit a reduced bureaucracy, to implement its policy. In the effort to ensure that the goals of reform would be implemented, more rather than fewer controls had to be imposed. Standards and testing for excellence in students and teachers can be viewed as efforts to monitor the progress of policy change, but once again the bureaucrat is charged with the task of developing the measuring device and applying it in an equitable fashion. It would seem that any efforts to go around the bureaucratic wall has left reformers coming back for assistance to those whom they have held in suspicion.

The Ineffectiveness of Reform Efforts

Reform efforts such as the Secondary Education Review were an attempt to change curriculum policy and yet retain political control of the process. Experts were used in an advisory capacity and bureaucrats would have the responsibility of implementing the new programs. Because policy-makers did not effectively talk with teachers about their practice, they had mistaken assumptions about what it is that teachers do and how they change their practice. Recent experiences with unsuccessful attempts at curriculum implementation have yielded certain insights into the nature of teaching which tend to render "top down" reform efforts ineffective.

1. Teaching as Meaning

Studies of the history of reforms suggests that schools respond quickly to messages that reinforce what they already do. Thus the recent emphasis on teacher-centred core curriculum could be expected to gain quick support from some educators (Goodlad, 1983, pp. 4-7). In eighty years of reforms that have come and gone, teacher-centred curriculum has not changed. Recent reforms, which focus on the creation of effective schools, will only heighten the efficacy of teacher-centered curriculum. What will be reinforced will be the impression that teaching is a step-by-step process which does not allow for invention, imagination, performance and

orchestration. These are qualities that are important to effective education in its true sense (Cuban, 1986, p. 7-11).

The emphasis on assessment and the results of test scores mistakenly reinforces the value of teacher-centered delivery systems in the minds of policy-makers. As a consequence more time will be set aside for preparing students for test writing, while time for activities of a worthwhile education will be diminished (Cuban, 1986, pp. 7-11). What teachers need is time to reflect and discuss teaching with their colleagues. The present organizational structure of schools does not permit this. Improving teacher standards will lead to no change in what happens in classrooms, because the standards used only more sharply define what already exists (Cuban, 1982, p. 113-118).

Policy-makers in recent reform efforts have assumed that change must be made from outside the school. They have also assumed that lists of desirable characteristics for effective educational leaders, teachers, and students can transform these people. Edmonds, a supporter of the list logic of effectiveness training, is quoted as having said that "... far more is known about ... the features that characterize an effective school than we know about how the school becomes effective in the first place." (Barth, 1986, pp. 293-296). Yet time and again these lists are used as though they are a panacea for solving problems in education.

Lists of what constitute effective teachers ignore important aspects of what is involved in teaching. Educators do not become teachers to gain satisfaction from preparing students for tests. They choose teaching because they want to promote the growth and development of young people. Lists of characteristics provide accountability. Caring, creativity and innovation cannot be reduced to lists of this kind. These are the qualities that are desired in teachers, yet these are stifled by forced compliance to prescriptions through mandatory testing. Small wonder then that the most competent people show outward signs of compliance, but behind the

classroom door do what they must as responsible caring adults. In a community of learners, people learn to think critically and analytically together. "School is not a place for big people who are learned and little people who are learners" (Barth, 1986, p. 295) The teacher who feels a responsibility for the whole child cannot rely on the simplified view of reality offered by models of what teaching should be like. These teachers personalize the general objectives of the curriculum so that these are consistent with their own values and become relevant to the students in their class (Lortie, 1975, 66-67). The rationalized model, which does not take account of the understanding teachers have of their work and the basis on which they make programatic choices, cannot meet with success in efforts to implement change. Yet these very models that legislators have insisted be followed in efforts to bring new policy to the classroom.

2. Reforming Practice

To be critical of the method of reform is not to deny that reforms in Alberta's education system were needed. Teachers could have made a valuable contribution to the content and the process of reforms. An editorial in the ATA News noted that teachers have been left out before and this led to failure in the implementation of the change (Editorial, 1985, p. 2).

In a practical sense, new programs fail because new tasks are assigned to individuals who are part of the system, and who are unable to make the transitions required on their own. Thorstein Veblen and Robert Merton called this the "trained capacity," meaning that in learning to do one set of tasks the individual has learned not to do another set of tasks (Bardach, 1977, p. 127). In mandated change there is usually no one to help teachers in the classroom after the directives are given. Accordingly, teachers will either comply minimally, comply whole-heartedly, or carry on as they always have. Teachers are caught between using the pedagogy that

works given their context and the expectations that are held out for them (Cuban, 1986, pp. 7-11).

Inservice on new programs may also not be an appropriate means for implementing change. In his doctoral study on the Mentor program for implementing the 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum, Carson observed that at least two mistaken assumptions about change were generally held. One assumption is that the organization is changing, but the people of which it is comprised are not. A second assumption is that all human action, including teaching, is rationally planned action (Carson, 1984, p. 14).

We do not know how to make reform without further extending control over participants in the change process. In curriculum implementation there is a "meeting of the technical rationality of the management of organizational change and the practical rationality of pedagogy." (Carson, 1984, p. 6) The management model dominates in such a way that teaching practice itself is transformed (Carson, 1985, p. 6) The responsibility of the teacher to educate students becomes an exercise in accountability to the system (Carson, 1984, p. 12). Centralists and reductionists believe they can control and predict the curriculum. There is a refusal to recognize the unpredictable nature of curriculum phenomena in the classroom as teachers and students breath life into it (Hughes, 1980, p. 25).

Traditionally the bureaucrats in the department of education had the authority to develop curriculum policy. In the sixties and seventies they were joined by experts from the universities. During this same period there was a growing distrust of bureaucrats and experts who, it was believed, had failed to deliver on their promises.

The unpopular 1971 Alberta social studies curriculum had been the creation of an elite group of educational bureaucrats and university experts. The anti-bureaucratic theory explains in part why some politicians and certain sectors of the public were determined to gain control of the policy-making process. The Premier

of the day, Peter Loughheed, noted that the government had to work in the public interest to gain control of the goals of education away from the arbitrary whim of educational bureaucrats. Social studies was not specifically mentioned. However, subsequent efforts by the government to define social studies content suggests that this was one subject area where it was deemed that what is considered politically, socially, and culturally valuable had to be preserved from the hand of the bureaucrat.

During the late seventies and the early eighties, political control of curriculum policy development was established through government appointed committees. Charged with the task of managing interest group input and feedback on government policy initiatives, the committees searched out a policy direction consistent with the objectives set out by the politicians. It was suggested that political control of curriculum was in the public's best interest when, in fact, it seems to have been more in the politician's self-interest. The process of gaining political control of curriculum policy was incremental. Through successive committee reviews of policy, control first gained in student achievement assessments culminated in the setting of policy across the curriculum in the Secondary Education Review.

Teachers, assumed to be part of the bureaucracy, had been ignored or had their voices muted in the committee approach to making curriculum policy. This was especially so in the formation of curriculum policy through the Secondary Education Review.

The irony in the reform initiated by the Secondary Education Review lies in the fact that the implementation of the programs fell to the bureaucracy and experts whose numbers and influence in education it sought to reduce. To ensure political control of reform, increasing controls have had to be imposed. In the long run we might anticipate that more rather than fewer bureaucrats will be required to manage the controls.

Research on teaching as meaning and on the nature of change in practice

suggests that recent efforts to reform teaching practice by extending greater control over it are unlikely to succeed. Calls for teachers and schools to become excellent through effectiveness training suggests that policy-makers in this province had fallen prey to the "list logic" of reform. Paradoxically, they negated their other calls for a caring and innovative teaching force. Teachers are more than bureaucrats implementing a program. Many want to be caring and innovative in their work with youth. On these matters teachers did not have input into calls for reform.

The success of prescribed change depends on the expectations and the individual's adhesion to the system. Bardach suggests that those who have been asked to contribute the least are likely to resist the most (Bardach, 1977, p. 111). Bardach's theory seems to have been borne out in part by the response of Alberta's social studies teachers at the Red Deer Symposium of March, 1986. Teachers were consulted minimally in the reform of social studies policy, and they expressed their disapproval. If the theory holds true, resistance may further develop when new programs hit the classroom.

Bureaucratic Rationality and the Policy-making Process

Efforts to politically control the curriculum policy-making process and the classroom practice of teachers has lead to an ever increasing rationalization of those processes. Weber observed that radical rationalization, or planned action in the extreme, leads to irrationality (Lowith, 1982, p. 41). Planned action in life comes about through "a system of multiple dependencies, an 'iron cage' of 'subordination', a general subjection of man to an 'apparatus'." (Lowith, 1982, p. 43) Every individual is bound by these systems.

The rationality which forms the iron cage is the source of the individual's freedom. Paradoxically, the more human action is restrained, the less predictable and more irrational it becomes. The freer a person is to choose his means for

achieving a purpose the more rational and understandable are his actions. The freedom to pursue one's goals through available means signifies the responsibility of human action (Lowith, 1982, p. 46).

Weber argues that people who act responsibly consider the consequences of their action. They adhere to the "ethic of responsibility." This form of action stands in contrast to the "irrational" action of those who disregard the consequences of what they do. People who act in this manner adhere to the "ethic of conviction" (Lowith, 1982, p. 47). Weber declared that the real problem in modern society is the rationalization to the irrational. The more action is planned the less responsibility people have for their actions. The institutions, ideas, and processes which were once a means to an end in human action, are now ends in themselves as ever increasing controls are placed on human action (Lowith, 1982, p. 48).

Weber believed one must accomplish within the "irrational" world of which we are a part, and yet stand in opposition to it by acting with rationality and taking responsibility for our actions. Rationality is demonstrated when an individual acts responsibly within the sphere of universal dependency on planned action. The entrepreneur is an example of such a person according to Weber. He is not responsible to the system, but responsible in his actions. In this way progress transcends the planned action that is simply an affirmation of that which has been made routine. An individual who is acting responsibly does not hold faith in planned action. (Lowith, 1982, pp. 52- 57).

In contrast, progress that is based on the affirmation of the routine in daily life means moving forward in resignation and in predetermined ways. Such rationally planned action holds a faith in existing values and techniques and is most evident in models that seek to reconstruct reality. This is ironic because one purpose of models is to help us understand reality better so that we might transcend it. Yet the models, once in place, define reality and faith is placed in the value of such planned

action.

Schools are being influenced by those who view schooling as a very rational process. Arthur Wise, an American educator, defines rationalization as "the purposeful organization of activities and goals . . . [and] to employ explanations that seem reasonable . . . but are unrelated to the true explanations." (1977, p. 43) Wise views efforts to further proceduralize, bureaucratize, and rationalize education as hyperrationalization. He attributes this situation to the work of policy-makers outside the local school system (Wise, 1977, pp. 43-44).

The hyperrationalization process in schooling is expressed by recurring attempts to manage through the use of rational systems borrowed from management science. Evidence of these attempts is found in projects which stress accountability; planning, programming, budgeting systems (PPBS); management-by-objectives (MBO); and a host of other theoretical formulations rooted in economics. Effectiveness and efficiency are the bottom line as education is viewed as just another input-output system (Wise, 1977, p. 46). The imposition of management models on the schooling process, allows policy-makers to assume that schools are under control. When reality destroys that assumption, well intentioned legislators and bureaucrats seek out other management models which hold the promise of that elusive control they want. This effort results in further hyperrationalization of the system (Wise, 1977, p. 47).

Deficiencies in an approach that uses rationalized models to resolve complex problems becomes readily apparent when the solutions are blatantly inappropriate. For example, when crime is on the rise, developing a moral education program for students will not solve the structural problems in the economy that cause crime. Hyperrationalized bureaucratic decision-making tends to want to apply first-order solutions to complex problems. For example, if students and teachers are incompetent, then the solution is to give them competency exams. This "solution" leads to a

demoralizing reliance on wishful thinking and the creation of false hopes in magical solutions. Where schools could not solve problems before, a new gimmick, money, or legislation will lead to sudden discovery of the knowledge to resolve the issue (Wise, 1977, pp. 44-45). The disillusionment that follows the failure of these schemes often results in another round of even tighter controls.

Businessmen frequently push governments to be more rational, as they believe they are in decision-making. This push leads to a false equating of a relatively simple business environment with the complex one of public policy (Doern and Phidd, 1983, p. 140). Unfortunately politicians themselves do little to dispel the myth, when they know no better themselves, or the illusions serve their purposes.

The rationalized models which are used to predict the relationships between changes and results are not questioned. Models freeze one aspect of reality as it was viewed by certain historically situated observers, a view which in itself is distorted by the circumstances the viewers find themselves in. The reality of teaching and schooling have so far eluded research attempts to explain them in any really meaningful way, yet superficial efforts are directed at improving the techniques and measurements for change as though these were understood (Wise, 1977, p. 49-50). Policy-makers and practitioners alike must avoid continuing to confuse theories of causes of change and theories of managing change with the theories of changing (Fullan, 1982, p. 7). Since many models imposed on schools stem from those in business management, schools have had to try and become efficient, effective, and its members accountable. Policy-makers fail to realize that the bottom line in education is the quality of interpersonal relationships; it is not profit. Success requires caring, imagination, and innovation not conformity to yet another model.

Action can be directed by a "rationality" that says we are responsible, or it can be directed by "irrational" planned action that places a faith in models and robs people of responsibility as it seeks to make them behave in predetermined ways.

Recommendations for change in the Secondary Education Review and the June, 1985, Policy Statement showed confusion over which of these directions policy should take. On the one hand there was a call for students to become responsible risk-takers, to be innovative, and develop an entrepreneurial attitude to life. Teachers too are to be responsible in the freedom to choose instructional methods, to be innovative in developing a stimulating learning environment, and to participate in policy-making so that such an environment might be created. On the other hand, policy-makers opted for further planned action. Standards of excellence in courses have been set for students, and, how well they achieve on exams plays a large part in determining their future. Students and teachers have had only token participation in policy-making. Objectives, materials, and methods have been prescribed for us as teachers, and professional evaluation has been put in place to ensure that we use the prescribed effective teaching methods. These inherent contradictions in curriculum policy need to be reassessed.

The extension of political control over curriculum policy-making processes and classroom practice, as experienced in the Secondary Education Review, suggests that more planned action is the direction favoured. In a rationally planned approach to policy-making, the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee, appointed to make policy recommendations, had been given a set of directives that demanded that a curriculum policy be developed that assures that schools are efficient and effective, and students, teachers, and all stakeholder groups are accountable. Contrary to what is known about curriculum implementation, the Government seems to have mistakenly assumed that change in curriculum can be made by decree and enforced with controls much as might be done in the making of traffic laws.

The rigid planned action of policy resulting from the Secondary Education Review, requires years of bureaucratic deliberation before it is implemented. If the policy ever had a 'fit' with reality at one point, it will not likely do so by the time it

reaches the classroom door. Classroom practice is continually being reshaped by the thousands of students and teachers who live in Alberta's classrooms. Curriculum policy and classroom practice must continually undergo reinterpretation and adaptation to fit the context of the classroom. Despite the evidence, some persist in the belief that the models of reality can be imposed anywhere and anytime. This tendency towards hyperrationality goes beyond perception informed by reality, to perception informed by perception. The perception and the reality are layered one over the other without strong connections between them.

Summary and Conclusions

A critical analysis of the content of the Secondary Education Review in the context of similar efforts at curriculum policy change efforts across North America in the 1980's suggests that a number of assumptions were made. Policy-makers seem to have assumed that change is a cyclical process alternating between conservative and progressive views of curriculum. In fact, calls for change in the eighties have been the product of new alliances between traditional forces. Failure to recognize this situation had led politicians, who have assumed control of policy-making, to call for reduced curriculums while adding more courses to the curriculum. This circumstance suggests that politicians concerned with popularity are not appropriate for the role of policy-makers in education.

Policy-makers have also made the assumption that education is sufficiently the same across Canada and North America that the same policies can be adopted by schools in Alberta as those in British Columbia, Ontario, Newfoundland, or New York. Examples of this policy transplant are seen in the emphasis on core curricula and the setting of standards in the rhetoric of the Secondary Education Review. Other jurisdictions had employed these terms earlier. Alberta's policy-makers joined their counterparts elsewhere in further assuming that student and teacher excellence

can be measured with exams.

A critical analysis of the policy-making processes suggests that efforts to maintain political control has led to the use of government appointed committees for the purpose of developing policy. The reliance on committees seems to have grown out of a distrust of bureaucrats and experts as the shapers of policy. Teachers were consulted minimally in the policy-making process, because they were assumed to be bureaucrats. The proper role of bureaucrats it seems is to implement the reforms.

New policy not only called for changes in curriculum, but for change in teaching practice. Directives suggested that teachers would have to take effective teacher training as part of the drive to create excellent schools. Research suggests that policy-makers have made some false assumptions about teaching practice and the way in which people change.

The rationality of teaching is not the rationality of management imposed models. Teachers work from their own theories of action. While we often have difficulty expressing these, we have seldom been encouraged to. As a result, teachers have not developed a formal, rational language to describe or name their theories. The absence of a stated theory of action may in fact mean that teachers are not fully aware of what is happening at the conscious and verbal level. That does not mean, however, that a theory of action is not recognizable. Any resort to scientism for explanations of teaching practice would invite further hyperrationalization as legislators seek their own ways to define what takes place in the classroom.

Weber suggests that people should take responsibility for their actions and stand in opposition to the irrationality of the planned action found in models. This suggestion should encourage teachers to question the assumptions that underlie management models of change in practice. Public administration generally and education specifically shares the values of society with business. The bottom line in the former is people, whereas in the latter it is profit. Having recognized this point

of departure, policy-makers in education need to reconceptualize the relationship between curriculum policy-making and classroom practice.

If school reforms in the 1980's are to be different from previous reforms, a first step is to achieve an agenda for debate based on consensus. Schools and communities must work together to make needed reforms. Outsiders alone cannot make changes to teaching practice. Teachers must examine their practices and make the changes responsibly.

CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS A RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CURRICULUM POLICY-MAKING AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

The Secondary Education Review raised a number of concerns about the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice. The government defined the goals and objectives of the Review and public input was solicited. The educational bureaucracy's influence on policy was much restricted. The views of teachers, assumed to be a part of the bureaucracy, were not sought; yet, teachers were and are expected to implement the mandated changes.

This circumstance points to a gap between the intentions for change and the means for putting these into practice. In the absence of dialogue between the policy-maker and the classroom practitioner, the gap widens. My personal experience as a teacher and my reading of research on implementation suggests that such an approach to change has little chance of success. There is a need to search for alternatives which will allow for a more active involvement of practitioners in the change process. This chapter attempts to develop some of these alternatives. It begins with a review of research findings in educational change with respect to the relationship between curriculum policy-making and classroom practice. It then explores some ways of reconceptualizing the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice.

Implementation Research and the Case for Reconceptualization

The Rationality of the Classroom

Research on curriculum policy implementation began as a field of inquiry

because of the failures of the numerous change efforts in the 1960's. The results of the research led to a gradual realization of the problems of effecting change in schools. Studies on contemporary policy-making suggest that the policy-makers did not give much consideration to what it means to be a teacher, nor had they given due consideration to what it means to change practice. Earlier failures at change efforts have not slowed attempts to effect change. As Michael Fullan notes:

If we broaden the term "innovation" to include all educational changes through legislation, new and revised curricula, and special projects . . . it is clear that change is common fare for school people. (1982, p.4)

While statistics on the number of innovative programs for a Canadian school district are unavailable, the New York City Board of Education piloted no fewer than 781 of these between 1979 and 1981 (Fullan, 1982, p. 4). When one considers that many other attempts at change would not be recorded, such as the use of different materials or procedural practices as engendered by administration or adopted by teachers from what they have seen or read about, change is a fact of life in schools. In an environment where rushing to change for the sake of change is considered fashionable, even reasonable, perhaps the only responsible action teachers can take is to resist change (Fullan, 1982, p. 90).

The goal of educational change is the change of practice. The change in practice is multidimensional. Components involved in the implementation of new programs include possible changes in one, two, or all three of the following: 1) materials, 2) teaching strategies, and 3) beliefs (Fullan, 1982, p. 30). This order, too, represents the degree of difficulty in accepting change. New materials present the least threat, while adopting new teaching strategies presents a greater threat. Change in beliefs creates the most fundamental threat to a teacher's role identity. Achieving change of all three elements simultaneously is most difficult.

Traditionally the change process has involved the imposition of an objective reality or planned action on the subjective reality of the classroom teacher. Each

teacher gives personal meaning to the classroom situation they are in. Policy-makers must understand that teachers adapt curriculum according to how they interpret their situation. The interpreting process is informed by the assumptions and interests the teacher has and how the teacher perceives the interests of students. The interpretation of the meaning of change is also informed by the complex of roles that exist within a classroom. For example, the introduction of a textbook in the class may call for a new role to be played by teacher and student. The degree to which the participants are willing to change roles is the degree to which the change will be implemented. Teachers are likely to put up a great deal of resistance to changing what 'works'. Still another influence on the interpretation of the value of a curriculum change is the conceptualization of what it means to teach and learn a subject. If the status quo is disrupted too greatly, participants will reject outright the changes. Such was the case with the 1971 social studies curriculum in Alberta (Werner, 1981, pp. 138-143). Experience with the implementation of that curriculum suggests that indeed "[i]nnovations are an act of faith " wherein the amount of effort "...required to learn . . . new skills or roles is a useful index to the magnitude of resistance." (House, 1974, p. 73)

Personal identity is in part defined by the knowledge and skill to perform jobs well. Change threatens that identity by invalidating knowledge and skill, and it often confuses our purposes (Marris, 1975, p. 16). Teachers are concerned with the legitimization of their action. Change must be introduced in small increments. Doing so allows the teachers to adapt their consciousness as well as those of students to the new roles that will be required of them. This action requires a facilitating environment and a responsive consultant who represents the new consciousness (Butt, 1981, pp. 105-106).

Culture of the School

The failure of innovation in schools is not only explainable by teacher and student resistance to change, it may also be explained more generally in the ways the schools respond to outside forces. Society and the participants in education have a "social-historically determined view of what a school system is and should be." (Sarason, 1982, pp. 87 and 88) This conception acts as a block to the acceptance of an innovation. Sarason argues that the school culture is made up of many regularities which have assumed outcomes. While there are frequent discrepancies between the regularities and the outcomes, the means for recognizing these are usually not built in to the system. When changes to regularities are considered, often little or no attention is given to the multitude of regularities that already exist, nor are alternatives to a particular regularity explored. Failure to consider existing regularities means in practice that new regularities are not adopted (Sarason, 1982, pp. 116 and 117).

The regularities in school that require the greatest effort at change are those involving the teacher-child relationship. Yet these have least yielded to reform efforts. Current concerns about accountability are misplaced when discussions ignore the other programmatic regularities of the school (Sarason, 1982, pp. 116 and 117). In similar fashion, reform goals that fail to account for what already exists are doomed to failure.

The classroom, unlike the planned change, is complex. Huberman characterizes this complexity as threefold. One aspect is the "multidimensionality" of the classroom. The teacher must be concerned with learning, instruction, discipline, relationships, supplies and a host of other matters if the class is to be conducted through a lesson. That many of these elements of classroom life must be attended to at the same time suggests a second aspect of complexity, or "simultaneity." A number of activities take place simultaneously including instruction, monitoring,

responding, questioning, disciplining, and providing a sense of humour. The third aspect is "unpredictability." Unpredictability refers to the fact that no matter how well one plans, a lesson may not work. The teacher then needs to plan on their feet to ensure that learning will yet occur (Huberman, 1978, p. 4).

Teachers struggle to coordinate these three basic realities of classroom life in their efforts to create a sound learning environment. Generally a teacher's preactive decision-making shows a disregard for changing contextual factors and for broader objectives and evaluation. The focus tends to be on either the student or the subject; rarely is there a meshing of the two. Teacher decisions most frequently concern matters of activities and content to be utilized in the classroom. They tend to settle quickly on a lesson plan and form a mental image of the lesson in progress. This mental image forms the basis for judging the desirability of student behavior and determines whether a change in approach is needed while the lesson is in progress. Teachers often do not take the opportunity to make decisions at the many decision points that occur while teaching. When they do, they usually consider only one or two alternatives. It seems that teacher decision-making tends to lack comprehensiveness and critical reflection after decisions are made (Oberg, 1980, pp. 55-57).

Because teachers lack comprehensiveness and critical reflection in their decisions, it has been argued that perhaps teachers can best participate in a cooperative role with curriculum developers in the adaptation and implementation of programs (Oberg, 1980, p. 61). The implication of such a position is that teachers should continue to serve the more bureaucratic function of developing and implementing program, rather than the professional role of assisting in setting curriculum policy. If teachers were to be involved in curriculum development in a broader scope than the classroom level, their decisions in the classroom might reflect their broader awareness.

The Politics of Change

It seems that conceptions of what constitutes teaching and the nature of the culture of the school are both constraints to change. The extent to which proposed changes are defined by one group alone is the extent to which problems in implementation will be encountered (Fullan, 1982, p. 29).

Results from extensive research into change efforts of the sixties and seventies suggest that three factors relating to the politics of change are important to the success or failure of reforms. Berman and McLaughlin assert, first, the conceptualization of the change process is far more significant than the content or the method of teaching that is to change. When policy-makers attempt to make curriculum changes they tend to employ rational step-by-step approaches which ignore the culture of the setting. These approaches provide obstacles to the change process. One common failure is to assume that the time frame for change can be controlled by those outside the school. The fact that schools adopt these arbitrary time lines attests to the oversimplification of what is involved in the change of practice (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978).

Second, the extent to which an innovation will meet with success or failure is the extent to which it meaningfully involves all those who are participants, directly and indirectly, in the change process. It takes time to develop constituencies. Typically the large group which is ignored is the one that is assumed to have no direct or indirect interest. When the project is in trouble, it is this group which one must rely on for support (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978). Often the large group ignored is the teaching force.

Third, while a small percentage of change efforts were successfully implemented, few of these survived when funding was stopped. This highlights the significance of developing a constituency for change. Without it, one cannot survive the competition for resources (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978). An idea, no matter

how good it is, will not stand on its own merit.

For successful change to occur, participants must know what the change means. This knowledge allows us to understand the actions and reactions of each. To comprehend change at a macro level, one must combine individual meanings associated with change with an understanding of organizational and interorganizational factors which influence the process of change as the various agencies and institutions interact. Reform in education must be understood as a sociopolitical process (Fullan, 1982, pp. 4-5).

The reformers of the 1960's either did not understand or misunderstood the sociopolitical nature of change in education. They frequently ignored or were unaware of the importance of combining personal meaning with institutional factors. Their failures to implement change in the 1970's is summed up by Fullan:

The main reason for failure [to implement curriculum change] is simple—the developers went through a process of acquiring *their* meaning of the new curriculum . . . there was no provision for allowing [teachers] to work at the meaning for themselves of the changes before them. (1982, p. 103)

A number of false assumptions about educational change contributed to this failure to implement new programs. Essentially these stem from a Research and Development (R&D) approach to educational improvement and include:

1. Improving educational performance requires innovative educational technologies.
2. Improving educational performance requires the provision of missing resources to school districts.
3. Improving educational performance requires a targeted project focus. (Sarason, 1982 p. 82)

More to the point, it was assumed that the control of change must be in the hands of experts outside the school and classroom. To fall prey to the same assumptions and repeat this costly and frustrating effort at curriculum change in the 1980's would be nothing short of absurd; yet, the danger of this recurring is more than a mere possibility. It seems that politicians have now assumed the role of the experts in

control of change.

Theoretical models of how implementation should proceed only account for certain elements of educational reality. The use of these is a reflection of our naivety of what constitutes the educational system. Butt cites Walker who views curriculum development as involving three separate enterprises. One of these, curriculum policy-making, provides the framework and guidelines for curriculum. The second, generic curriculum development, provides the models from which teachers design their own strategies and materials. The latter denotes the third enterprise, site specific curriculum development, which refers to the adaptations which curriculum must undergo to meet the requirements of the classroom. Contrary to the belief that teachers should act as program developers and implementers only, teachers need to be included in a more holistic, practical theory of change wherein the three enterprises of curriculum development can be examined together (Butt, 1981, pp. 91 and 92).

Because teachers are not involved in the three areas of curriculum development, their decision-making is a highly political process. An OISE study into decision-making found that teachers must continually make decisions regarding objectives, choices of materials and the best teaching strategies to use within the context of their own beliefs and the beliefs and needs of the students and the community at large. A teacher's choices of alternatives for action in the classroom are restricted by the context in which they find themselves.

Teacher decision-making is made political because other educational agents, such as administrators and supervisors, do not provide the conditions for rational bureaucratic decision-making. Bureaucracies typically have a standard of operating procedures as well as clearly defined goals that guide implementation. School systems do not exhibit the characteristics typical of bureaucracies. Because of this set of circumstances, Leithwood contends that teaching remains more a craft than

a profession (1980, pp. 52 and 53). In point of fact, teaching is an art rather than a craft, for craft implies a technical procedure for the purpose of achieving a final product, much as a bureaucracy might implement program to achieve pre-set goals. Art implies creativity and innovation in the development of a project that is in a continual state of becoming. A professional acts responsibly on the basis of the knowledge and experience he or she has. Because teaching is an art, teachers are indeed professionals rather than bureaucrats.

Critical Analysis

A change in policy does not necessarily mean a change in classroom practice. Research into the rationality of the classroom indicates that teaching is a complex process wherein reform must be achieved at the personal level of the teacher if it is to occur at all. A holistic, practical theory of change as it relates to reform in the classroom is needed. However, the reform process of the Secondary Education Review suggests that contemporary reformers in Alberta view teachers as having a role in the development of curriculum and the implementation of program, but not as partners in the setting of curriculum policy.

Policy-makers need to conceptualize change in curriculum policy and classroom practice as a process involving participants who are both directly and indirectly involved in reform. Ironically the policy reform process in the Secondary Education Review by-passed teachers, the group most directly effected by change. Without teacher participation, policy-makers could only make assumptions about the regularities that already exist in the classroom, and how their reforms will change the practice of teachers. The exclusion of teachers from the policy setting process implies that there is likely to be not only a disagreement with policy-makers over means but also goals of reform.

Teachers are not bureaucrats who implement a pre-determined program.

Yet, because legislators have become involved in reform, teachers, now more than ever, are viewed as part of the bureaucratic machinery. Teachers are continually involved in curriculum decisions, though at the classroom level the focus of that decision-making seems restricted to matters concerning students and subject rather than broader curriculum objectives. That teacher decision-making should be so narrow in focus is not surprising, because, as in the case of the Secondary Education Review, teachers have not been invited nor have they expected that to be consulted beyond the development of curriculum program according to objectives set by policy-makers. Curriculum development at the policy level, the generic program level, and at the classroom level needs to be reconceptualized so as to involve and refocus teacher participation at all levels of the process. More than that, change needs to be reconceptualized as a process requiring ongoing discussion about the discrepancies between policy and practice.

Responses to the Problem of Change: Problem Solving Approach

The failure to achieve change as intended has led to the perception that change is a problem. Efforts to solve the problem of change have been focused on the matter of implementation. Implementation strategies involve the decisions and choices that are made both implicitly and explicitly on how to bring about a change in practice. From research on implementation we know that there are a number of common implementation strategies that have proven ineffective, while there are others less commonly used that have been demonstrated to be effective. Ineffective strategies include the use of outside consultants, packaged approaches, one-shot inservice, pay for training, formal evaluation, and the comprehensive project approach. By contrast, the effective strategies are mutually adaptive, that is the program can be adapted to suit the practitioner as the practitioner adapts to the program. Effective strategies include concrete extended training that is teacher-specific, classroom

assistance, modeling, regular project meetings that involve teachers and deal with practical problems, local development of materials, and the participation of principals in the training process (Sarason, 1982, p.76 and 77).

Over time we have become so accustomed to the rhetoric of change that we rarely stop to think what change really means (Fullan, 1982, p. 24). Yet, the assumptions we make about change, consciously and more frequently unconsciously, direct our actions. Real change typically involves loss, anxiety, and struggle (Marris, 1975, p. 2). Failure to understand these processes as a natural part of the change process has contributed to the misinterpretation and ignoring of important aspects of change. What we must understand is that ambivalence and even hostility towards change is inevitable and an innovation "cannot be assimilated unless its meaning is shared" (Marris, 1975, p. 121). Change necessarily involves conflict. Marris contends:

Every attempt to pre-empt conflict, argument, protest by rational planning, can only be abortive: however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have power to manipulate changes act as if they have only to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. (1975, p. 166)

In the end, it must be remembered that not everyone will change as expected. Changes in the plan for change must be made as contingencies warrant (Fullan 1982, pp. 91 and 92).

A reconceptualization of the relationship between policy-making and classroom practice must address the concerns that have been raised by past differences in beliefs between those who have planned the curriculum and those who are to put it into practice. Conversation plays an important role in making explicit the goals of developers with the various groups involved. It also facilitates the negotiating process for practitioners who try to reconcile their beliefs with those of the program. Any innovative ideas must survive the teacher's own theory of effectiveness given

their strengths and weaknesses and the classroom context in which they work (Sanders and McCutcheon, 1984). It must be accepted that programs will necessarily undergo change as a result of the exchange of beliefs (Werner, 1981, pp. 148-149).

Understanding change as a problem has led to efforts at reconceptualizing implementation. It seems that the most effective implementation strategies allow teachers and school administrators to adapt their practices to the changes called for by the innovation. At the same time the innovation must be adapted to suit the setting or the culture of the school in which it is being introduced. The implication of this position is that teachers and administrators are still viewed more as the implementers of program rather than as participants in policy-making. In point of fact, teachers and administrators must be involved in policy-making if innovations are to have adaptability to the school setting in the first place. If educators at the school level are to participate in policy-making we need to stop viewing change as a problem to be solved by ever better implementation strategies.

All participants in education must work more closely together in a spirit of mutualism. In doing so each group of participants would come to a better understanding of the other's culture. Efforts could then be concentrated on the change process rather than on the protection or enhancement of political position. The participants in reform must be given an opportunity to question their assumptions about what the change is for, what exactly is to be changed, what the change means, and how it is to proceed. What is required is not only a commitment to change but a commitment to break through the notion that a hierarchy exists among participants. Change is a process not an event.

Alternative Views of the Relationship Between Policy and Practice

Change is not something to be implemented. The concept of implementation implies the technical notion that there is an end to be implemented and there is a

means for doing so. Such a notion of implementation is embedded in rationalized models of change. A wealth of research demonstrates the weaknesses in viewing change this way. Rather change should be seen as a process of thought in action. To understand change in this context requires a reconceptualization of the relationship between curriculum policy-making and classroom practice. Two possible alternatives are found in the concept of the symposium and action research.

The Symposium

One approach that should be considered as an alternative to the traditional means for developing curriculum policy and implementing it is that of the symposium. The symposium provides a forum in which face-to-face discussion can be conducted on the concerns the participants in education have. Through the dialogue the symposium fosters, participants can question, debate the various aspects of the change, and negotiate what is acceptable and reasonable to expect. The symposium allows for open-ended discussion whereby the participants can reconvene and reexamine the direction of the change process.

A review of the goals and organization for the March 14 and 15, 1986 Symposium in Red Deer is instructive of the value of this format as an approach to creating greater harmony in the relationship of policy and classroom practice. The goals of the Symposium were:

1. To bring together interested social studies educators to discuss the curriculum changes being proposed for social studies as a result of the *Secondary Education Review*.
2. To review and discuss the new curriculum change and implementation procedures being carried out through the *Secondary Education Review*.
3. To establish an ongoing dialogue with Alberta Education and among social studies educators regarding the content and processes of these changes.
4. To attempt to influence the process and direction of the social studies curriculum through the submission of recommendations for possible future directions. (McKay, 1986, p. 7)

The purposes of the Symposium were to provide a forum in which educators could

discuss the existing program, the proposed changes, and the process of change for social studies curriculum in the province.

Initiated by members of the social studies community and the Social Studies Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Symposium was organized to promote dialogue on policy and practice. Presentations, position papers, and responses were given in an effort to focus concerns and present a variety of viewpoints from classroom teachers, university personnel, and Alberta Education directors. All participants then worked in a small group setting to discuss and raise still other issues and concerns (McKay, 1986, p. 8).

The issues, concerns, and recommendations which emerged from the working groups became the basis for a submission to the Education Minister. The submission reflected the concerns social studies educators had about the role of teachers in curriculum decision-making as well as the content of the proposed changes (McKay, 1986, p.8).

On October 16 and 18, 1986 the dialogue was continued as part of the annual Social Studies Conference. Following the format of the Red Deer Symposium, the program reviewed the events that had transpired since March, explored further the meaning of teaching social studies, raised additional concerns about the direction of social studies curriculum, and discussed how teachers might be involved in change.

If we are to understand change in curriculum policy and classroom practice as a process of thought in action, the symposium offers another promising reconceptualization of this relationship. Dialogue on what it means to teach, on policy, and on the change process among key participants in education is important if reform efforts are to go beyond cosmetic changes in materials and truly examine curriculum expectations within the context of the classroom.

Action Research

Action Research originated with the work of Kurt Lewin in the 1940's. Lewin conceptualized action research as a means to describe group behaviour and interaction for the purpose of formulating "general laws." These laws would form the basis on which prescriptions for subsequent action in social behavior could be made (Lewin, 1947). Three aspects of his work which remain significant to current ideas in action research include his emphasis on practitioner participation, the democratic nature of the process, and the dual contribution to social science and social change (Carr and Kemmis, 1983, p. 53).

After its initial popularity, the use of educational action research gradually declined in the late 1950's, but has enjoyed a resurgence in recent years. Much of this resurgence is owed to the success of the Ford Teaching Project in Britain. The project was under the direction of John Elliot and Clem Adelman. Lawrence Stenhouse played an important role in framing its basic premises of operation. Stenhouse defined curriculum in terms of teaching practice. He asserted that teachers must be involved in research of their own practice. They should become what he termed the "extended professional" (Stenhouse, 1975).

For his part, Elliot sought to separate action research in the schools from both evaluative and deliberative research. In making this distinction, he characterized action research as emphasizing the everyday problems faced by teachers. Change is created within the context of the participants' understandings (Elliot, 1979).

The greatest resurgence of action research has taken place in Australia. There the increasing emphasis on school-based curriculum and the awareness on the part of teachers for the need to understand their practice in new ways has contributed to the vitality of action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982, p. 6). On the theoretical side, Carr and Kemmis (1983, 1986) have attempted to provide action research with a foundation in critical theory. On the practical side, Kemmis

and McTaggart (1982) and others have developed "practical" guides for applying action research in the classroom.

Critical action research can be defined as research engaged in by practitioners in an effort to understand their practice. Kemmis notes:

Action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out. (Kemmis, 1985)

Change is viewed as a process that both emanates from and involves careful consideration of existing practice within a given educational context.

Action research is a process. It is understood to be a spiralling cyclical process in which the four moments of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting are carried out in the effort to understand classroom practice and introduce any possible changes (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982, pp. 7-11). In fact action research looks very much like conventional practice. The significant difference is the deliberation with which action is carried out. Tripp states that action research as "[s]trategic action involves logical analysis in contrast to action which is a result of habit, intuition, or mere whim." (Tripp, 1984, p. 2) This is important to closing the performance gap, the difference between the stated theory and the "theory-in-action" (Ebbutt, 1985, p. 155).

There are different types of action research. Tripp describes these as technical, practical, critical, and emancipatory action research. Typically projects start with technical concerns, wherein the teacher wants to try a technique borrowed from outside research, or outside researchers want the teacher to test a theory (Tripp, 1984, pp. 4-12).

Action research may also begin when the teacher decides to examine or change some aspect of his/her own practice. For example, a teacher may want to determine which students he/she calls on most frequently and how he/she can better

involve all the students in the class. Outside researchers could help the teacher in examining this aspect of his/her practice. This is practical action research.

When the teacher begins to question why he/she does certain things in his/her practice and not others, then he/she is moving to the critical form of action research. Researchers would work collaboratively with the teacher in the questioning of his/her practice.

The emancipatory project is the most difficult to achieve, for it seeks to change the cultural constraints that contribute to certain kinds of classroom practice. In this form of research, the outsider, or consultant, becomes an integral part of a group engaged in emancipatory research (Tripp, 1984, pp. 4-12). In critical and emancipatory research the facilitator must remain self-critical and encourage a critique of his role in the process.

Carr and Kemmis specifically promote the critical and emancipatory focus of action research. They place greater emphasis on the application of critical theory to action research for the purpose of achieving emancipation from the contextual constraints that surround educational institutions (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, pp. 134-136).

Where there is a marked difference in the focus of writers is on the issue of whether or not the results of action research projects should be published. The issue has come about because some researchers, such as Carr and Kemmis, hold that action research is only for the purpose of informing the participants involved. They argue that the research has no meaning outside the context in which it has taken place. Publishing the research encourages theorizing, and this further promotes a separation between theory and practice and policy and practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1983, p. 167-168).

In contrast, other researchers believe action research should be published. Tripp says "... there should be public learning from private action." (1984, p. 18)

He is joined by Ebbutt who considers the publishing of reports as essential to a necessary public critique (1985, pp. 156-158).

Regardless of the academic debate, the decision of how to use the data must be arrived at collaboratively. What publication does is form a body of constructed knowledge which serves to allow theory to inform practice from the experience of others. At the same time, the caution to not generalize and build grand theories from the research must also be heeded.

This caution is particularly important because action research is becoming more widespread. Numerous accounts of various efforts to employ action research in improving practice can be found. Atwell describes how teachers learned about the writing process in their classrooms as they introduced new methods (1982). In another setting action research was seen as a way of personalizing teaching and providing teachers with a greater awareness of students and their abilities (Lasky, 1978). Through action research teachers have also become more critically aware of grading practices (Cooke et. al., 1982; Ross, 1984). It has facilitated the awareness of teaching actions and the need to share pedagogical knowledge among teachers, with the result that both teaching and learning have improved (Nixon, 1981; Baird and Mitchell, 1986; Butt, 1981; Ireland et. al., 1977).

Action research has many applications. It has proven effective in introducing new curricula (Robottom et. al., 1985) and providing a means for achieving school-wide improvement (Keiny, 1985). It has also been used as an approach to inservice training (Oliver, 1980) and for developing participatory management in schools (Thomas and Edgemon, 1984). These are but some of the examples that offer evidence of the success that change efforts have met with in using an action research approach.

If we are to understand change in curriculum policy and classroom practice as a process of thought in action, a promising reconceptualization of this relationship

is found in action research. It is a means for practitioner research in a democratic environment for the purpose of achieving social change. This is suggestive of the elements inherent in reconceptualizing educational change as a process and not an event.

Action research focuses on the problems faced by the teacher. Change is created within the context of the participant's understandings not those of outside policy-makers. Action research is a form of "self-reflective enquiry" to improve "rationality and justice." Outsiders in practical, critical, and emancipatory action research serve as facilitators working in a collaborative role with a teacher or a group of teachers for the purpose of examining practice within a given context. Theory and practice develop simultaneously in a multi-dimensional and unpredictable environment, the classroom.

Action research is a means for examining theory and practice, or praxis, in education. If we can work collaboratively in this process, there may yet be hope for a breakdown in the dichotomy that sees bureaucrats and legislators as policy-makers and teachers as implementers of program as was the case in the Secondary Education Review.

Summary and Conclusions

Research on curriculum change suggests that policy directives have a history of failure in getting beyond the beliefs teachers hold about their practice. The rationality of pedagogy does not yield to the rationalities imposed from outside the culture of the school. This circumstance suggests that there is a need to reconceptualize the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice.

Two alternative views of the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice are offered in the symposium and action research. While not a

panacea, both provide a forum in which policy-making and classroom practice might become layered one over the other with strong connections between them. Contradictions inherent in the educational process could be examined and confronted. Such a forum would allow participants the opportunity to examine what is changing and why, when change is considered. Either of these approaches promises to create a setting in which change is gradual and program and practice are mutually adaptive, a condition which research suggests is most conducive to change. Action research and the symposium may yet establish a climate wherein creativity and innovation can stand in opposition to rationally planned action, a climate where the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice remains open to discussion.

CHAPTER 6

LIVING THE QUESTIONS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CURRICULUM POLICY AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

The field of implementation research has approached the difficulties of effecting change in classrooms as a problem to which a solution, a "how to" technique, can be found. What has become evident from the research is that there is no formula for instant success in bringing policy to bear on practice. Where change efforts have met the satisfaction of the participants, generic program, and practice have been mutually adaptive. This condition for change requires a forum for dialogue wherein the participants view change as an ongoing process not an event. In it there is a recognition that not only is policy or program changing, but teachers as people are changing. This notion of how change occurs challenges the traditional views of what constitutes policy, the policy-making process, and classroom practice. Two promising alternative views of the relationship between curriculum policy and classroom practice are found in the symposium and action research. However, this does not mean that the question of relating curriculum policy to classroom practice can be closed.

In the first part of this chapter I will explore some of the questions I think need to be kept open. The questions are about policy, the policy-making process, classroom practice, relating policy-making to classroom practice, and dialogue. In the last part of the chapter I will conclude with some reflections on relating curriculum policy to classroom practice.

Questions in Policy and the Policy-making Process

This study began with a questioning stance. A stance that developed from my experiences and those of other social studies educators who had seen discrepancies between curriculum policy-making and classroom practice. The Alberta Secondary Education Review in particular provided an occasion to question the relationship between policy and practice.

The Alberta Government's Secondary Education In Alberta: Policy Statement of June, 1985, which followed the Review, called for a fundamental change in social studies curriculum. The Review process had however by-passed social studies educators. The knowledge they gained from classroom practice and the concerns they had about social studies education were ignored. Out of this circumstance grew a concern among teachers with the content of the new policy and the policy-making process. This prompted social studies educators to meet for a two day Symposium in Red Deer on March 14 and 15, 1986.

At the symposium, social studies educators questioned the shift in curriculum focus. While there was recognition of a need for changes, there was concern over the abandonment of the multi-discipline inquiry approach in favor of a more narrow emphasis on knowledge as revealed through the traditional disciplines of history, geography, and economics. The underlying questions that were being asked included: (1) What counts as knowledge in curriculum? and (2) Who had defined it to be so? It seems that the answers to those questions had not been open for discussion, at least not a discussion in which teachers participated. These are fundamental questions in education that must remain open to dialogue. While other stakeholder groups in education may want to close off such dialogue, teachers need to take responsibility in keeping it open. It seems that this is one decision point at which teachers have a choice in determining whether we want to be viewed as instructional experts who are accountable for implementation, or as pedagogues

responsible for our students and what we do in the classroom.

The Symposium was a demonstration of pedagogical responsibility. It was a moment when a group of teachers discussed their concerns about how the changes would effect their practice and what the implications of a content oriented curriculum would have for their students. As teachers we also were concerned about the conception that policy-makers seemed to have of teachers. We challenged traditional perceptions of what policy-makers believe is our role in education. We also challenged what many of us in the teaching body have also come to accept and believe is our role. Both policy-makers and teachers have been trapped by our socialization, and we have to work at breaking down the walls of the "iron cage" that we find ourselves confined by. This will not happen if both retreat into our traditional roles after the flurry of curriculum revision activities have passed, and we settle back into the routines of doing what we have always done. If the Symposium is to be more than a moment when we flirted with responsibility, we have to continue to question how we keep the channels for dialogue open. We also have to question whether or not we are acting as responsible professionals.

Conceptions of the roles of policy-makers and teachers are embedded in the traditional conceptual perspectives of curriculum policy and classroom practice. As teachers we need to recognize that the old tensions between the conservative and progressive impulses in curriculum are two forms of rationally planned action which have both worked to exclude teachers from participating in the setting of curriculum policy. We also have to recognize that the tensions have been breaking down and new alliances between the conservative and progressive forces have been forged in efforts to bring reform to schools in the 1980's. It is a movement that seems to have been spawned by a distrust of educational experts and bureaucrats as a result of what were perceived as failed curriculum reform efforts in the sixties and the seventies. Teachers have been viewed as being part of the bureaucratic infrastructure.

It is also a movement that believes control of curriculum policy centralized in the hands of politicians is the one way to ensure that curricular reforms will be implemented in the classroom. The implication is that ever increasing controls will be imposed to make this possible.

Rather ironically, the rhetoric of reform also calls for greater teacher freedom in choosing materials and activities for use in the classroom. Demands for the strengthening of the relationships of accountability are in direct contradiction with calls for innovation, creativity, and risk-taking that are the qualities of those acting responsibly. This circumstance suggests that the calls for policy change have not been contextualized. It also suggests that in the policy-making process, the question of how do we close the gap between curriculum policy and classroom practice must remain open to discussion.

That a gap exists between curriculum policy and classroom practice further implies that policy-making practices must be brought into question. Conceptual models of policy-making, such as the systems model, the rational model, public choice, and incrementalism provide a means for analyzing the policy-making strategies surrounding the Review. Embedded in these models of policy-making is the notion that it is a complex process. Also embedded in these models is the taken for granted assumption that the control of policy-making lies with the politician or the bureaucrats in government departments. In this view of policy-making, stakeholder groups may or may not be consulted and implementation falls to the bureaucracy. Policy-making efforts then move on to the next issue. Under these circumstances, it seems that policy-making is an event not a process.

Analysis of the historical context of change in social studies curriculum indicates that during times when policy-making is centralized, legislative control over the process is extended through the use of appointed committees. The case of the Secondary Education Review suggests that the committees begin with a set of goals

and objectives, then seek public feedback and develop a constituency for the statement of policy that stems from these. When policy-making is decentralized, bureaucrats in the department of education and experts from the universities are given the freedom to decide policy. In both approaches to policy-making, the perspective of the classroom teacher is ignored.

Frequently it is assumed that policies developed in other parts of Canada and North America can be adopted in Alberta's schools. Teachers are viewed as developers of generic program, a salesperson who will sell the new program to fellow teachers, and an implementer who will change at the whim of the policy-makers. This approach stems from a bureaucratic rationality of how change proceeds. It is an approach that ignores the context of the specific classroom, what it means to be a classroom practitioner, and what it means to change practice. While teachers at the Red Deer Symposium opened to question the traditional view policy-making and the role of teachers in education, it needs to remain open. We also need to keep open the question of what it means to make policy in a democratic society.

Questions in Classroom Practice

Keeping questions on policy-making open for discussion necessarily implies that questions on classroom practice also be open to the dialogue process. My experience, and my reading of the research on teaching as meaning, suggests that teachers inform their practice with theories of action that they develop on the basis of their own personality, conceptions of the nature of the students in the classroom, and what it means to teach and learn in a subject field. The art of teaching involves a uniqueness of personality, creativity, innovation, and orchestration. The teacher has a sense of responsibility for his students and for his own actions. It seems to me that students and teachers feel a sense of fulfillment when they are empowered to strike a balance between student, teacher, and curriculum. When any one of the

three factors becomes the center of the classroom, there is alienation felt in the student, the teacher, or both.

As teachers, our theories of action are often unarticulated and in fact may exist at an unconscious level. If we are to break free from the "iron cage" of the rationality imposed on us by the models of outsiders, do we not have to raise to the level of consciousness our own theories of action first? Can we expect to dialogue about policy-making with others if we do not discuss and understand teaching practice very well ourselves? It seems that we have to continually challenge ourselves to reflect on our practice and discuss what it is we do and why.

If we fail to become critical of our own practice we invite the further imposition of models of planned action as outsiders seek to understand and gain a measure of control over our classroom practice. We also invite the preservation of existing conceptions about curriculum policy-making that views teachers as the implementers of program only. How can we be accepted as participants in policy-making when we wait for curriculum changes to arrive before we make an effort to become involved? If we are to persuade others that change and hence policy-making is a process and not an event, then it seems that we have to adopt that view as responsible pedagogues. If we are to convince others that when policy changes are made it involves a change in practice and personal perceptions we as teachers have of ourselves and what we do, then we have to accept and believe that ourselves. If we are to take a responsible attitude toward our practice and the change process we have to challenge the notion that it does not matter what changes there are to policy and program because I will continue to teach as I always have anyway.

Questions on Relating Curriculum Policy-making to Classroom Practice

My experience as a teacher and the statements made by teachers at the Symposium in Red Deer suggest that if the gap between curriculum policy and

classroom practice is to be narrowed, there is a need for collaboration, a working together, among the participants in education and that includes classroom practitioners. There are two questions that have as yet to be explored through direct action. One is, can the participants collaborate to give those outside the classroom a perspective of what it means to be a teacher within the context of the classroom? Another is, can the participants collaborate to give teachers a broader perspective and awareness of curriculum concerns than the classroom affords? If participants can collaborate for these purposes, they will have gone a long way towards breaking down the policy-practice dichotomy. Policy-makers are traditionally concerned with control and predictability. Practitioners are concerned with theories of action that seem to be largely unconscious. Through collaboration and dialogue participants can better understand policy-making and classroom practice. This would create an opportunity for ever greater possibilities of critical awareness and change.

If we are to adopt the view that change is a process, we have to accept a number of perceptions on how we bring about change. To collaborate for the purpose of bringing about change means that the notions of control based on political power or expertise have to be continually held up for critical examination. Domination implies control, and participants need to be aware of what powers to control have been given up and why. To accept the idea that change is a process also implies that change is a way of being. We have to accept that there is no one model of change, policy, policy-making, or practice. To change means, we are changing our patterns of thought in action. This requires reflection and dialogue among participants. In this fashion the bureaucratic rationality of planned action would begin to break down. Concern for ends and means in human action would be brought together again in education as participants act out of a sense of responsibility rather than accountability.

Questions of Dialogue

Dialogue is important in getting past planned action and relating curriculum policy to classroom practice. Paulo Freire argues that dialogue allows people to become more aware of "limit situations" or ideologies and structural constraints that direct their action. In the process, they discover opportunities for change they never thought existed (1986). Hans Smits asserts that "collaborating through the means of conversation seem[s] to promote more reflective conversation" (1987, p. 143) While there seems to be a recognition of the value in dialogue, the question is how do we maintain a forum for dialogue?

The symposium and action research are promising forums for dialogue. But, these are not panaceas for curing the difficulties associated with relating curriculum policy to classroom practice. If either were to become part of the routine of deliberations on policy-making and classroom practice, a number of questions would have to remain open to discussion. Some questions would include: What are the power relationships among the participants? How do we bring people from around the province together for a symposium? On a provincial scale, how do participants in action research dialogue on policy and practice? Who interprets the documents that flow from the symposia and what is done with that information? How will the results of action research be used to further inform policy and practice? How do we go beyond dialogue into action? How do we maintain the vibrancy in deliberations over time?

Conclusion

In this thesis I have attempted to open up a number of questions on relating curriculum policy to classroom practice. My questioning began with what other social studies educators were saying about the content of curriculum policy, the policy-making process, and classroom practice at the Red Deer Symposium on March 14,

1985. The questions they posed were ones that had evolved in my own mind through my experience as a classroom teacher. What was encouraging was the fact that others were asking the same questions in an open forum. The discussion that took place at Red Deer, and a year later in Edmonton, is the type that might take place informally among teachers, but seldom does the opportunity for dialogue on policy and practice take place on a provincial scale.

When I began researching the question of what is the relationship between policy and practice, I discovered that a considerable amount of literature has been written on different ways of conceptualizing the policy-making process in education. Somehow these models did not give a satisfying explanation of the curriculum policy-making process. Using models to analyze the process has its limitations as I tried to demonstrate in this thesis. Models mask what the policy, the process, and classroom practice mean to the actual participants. These are a form of the bureaucratic rationality that substitutes for dialogue and responsible action.

Through my course work and further reading, I encountered a body of literature that showed the writers were trying to penetrate through the "iron cage" of bureaucratic rationality to see what the cage might look like if one could stand on the outside of it. The understanding that the accountability afforded by the planned action of bureaucratic rationality is at the heart of the models used to direct human action explains the contradictions found in policy. For example, while the results of the Secondary Education Review suggested there would be greater prescription of materials and teaching approaches, it also called on teachers to be more creative and innovative. This action seems to represent an attempt to ensure accountability and yet restore the freedom of responsible action that allows the search for means and ends to come together rather than separating them out as is frequently the case in policy-making.

I have come to understand that to view change as a process of thought and

action means that one must hold a critical stance in relation to the world. It means that we keep our minds open to new understandings as we probe our own conceptual perspectives as well as those of others. It means we continually search for alternative views in the complex reality we live. It also means we accept that there are no final solutions because circumstances change. We as individuals and our institutions are always in a state of becoming.

To view change as a process of thought and action implies that dialogue should be a central part of what we do as educators. It means that we communicate and work with one another to explore policy and practice in the school, the system, the professional association and particularly the specialist councils, and Alberta Education. It also means that we dialogue with the public on policy and practice. Dialogue is a continual process. We need to keep open the educational questions as being ones that involve all educators. There is a need to continually seek out and identify forums in which the questions can be entertained and acted upon.

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